



LUTHERAN EDUCATION

A Journal of the Faculty of Concordia University, River Forest

CONTENTS

WINTER 2002 VOL 138/NO. 2

Leadership

- 86 As Iron Sharpens Iron: Process and Reflections of Spiritual Leadership
- 95 Sergiovanni, Synodical Schools, and Servant Leadership
- 100 Changes in the Leadership Role of the LCMS District Education Executive
- 113 Horace Mann and Religion in Public Schools
- 124 Adiaphora and Organizational Vitality

Lutheran Education

Published since 1865 by the Faculty of
Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois.

Volume 138 Number 2 Winter 2002

Publisher George C. Heider, President, Concordia University, River Forest
Editors Jonathan Barz, Department of English, CURF
 William Rietschel, Educational Foundations, CURF

Associate Editors:

Gary Bertels, Department of Theology, CURF
Ruth Kurth, Department of Teacher Education, CURF
Eric Moeller, Department of Sociology, CURF

Editorial Assistant — Jo Ann P. F. Kiefer

Departments:

<i>Administrative Talk</i>	Glen Kuck, St. Paul Lutheran School, Chicago
<i>DCE Expressions</i>	Bill Cullen, Director of DCE Program, CURF
<i>Multiplying Ministries</i>	Rich Bimler, President, Wheat Ridge Ministries
<i>Secondary Sequence</i>	Craig Parrott, Lutheran High School Denver
<i>Teaching the Young</i>	Shirley Morgenthaler, Early Childhood Education, CURF
<i>Today's Lutheran Educator</i>	Jonathan Laabs, Executive Director, LEA

Consultants: Jonathan Laabs (Executive Director, Lutheran Education Association)
and Edward Grube (Director of Publications and Communications, LEA)

Cover Design: Del Klaustermeier

Lutheran Education (ISSN 0024-7488) is published four times per year: October, December, March, and June. Subscriptions are \$10 a year and are available from **Lutheran Education (Journal)**, 7400 Augusta Street, River Forest, IL 60305-1499.

Periodical postage paid at Nappanee, IN.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Lutheran Education*, 7400 Augusta St., River Forest, IL 60305-1499.

Lutheran Education is available on microfilm. Write to University Microfilms, North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Printed in USA.

Lutheran Education has been chosen as the professional journal of the Lutheran Education Association (LEA). Members of the LEA receive the journal as part of membership benefits. Inquiries regarding membership may be addressed to LEA, 7400 Augusta Street, River Forest, IL 60305-1499. The journal and LEA remain independent entities.

Departments

- 84 **From Where I Sit**
The Challenges of Leadership
William Rietschel
- 144 **Administrative Talk**
Leaders and Managers
Glen Kuck
- 147 **DCE Expressions**
Law and Gospel: A New Paradigm
Bill Cullen
- 151 **Today's Lutheran Educator**
Family Album
Jonathan Laabs
- 153 **Multiplying Ministries**
A Few Things I'd Like to See in the Church/School/Home . . .
Rich Bimler
- 155 **Secondary Sequence**
We Need a New Code
Craig Parrott
- 157 **Teaching the Young**
Social Living: Our Response to God's Love
Shirley Morgenthaler
- 159 **Book Review:**
When We Get It Wrong: Peter, Christ, and Our Path through Failure
Jonathan Barz
- 160 **A Final Word**
Leadership 101
George Heider

In This Issue: Leadership

86 As Iron Sharpens Iron: Process and Reflections of Spiritual Leadership

Mining meaning from movie clips and poems as well as prospecting commentary from texts and journals, Brockberg presents nuggets intended to prompt personal reflection into facets of spiritual leadership.

by Kevin H. Brockberg

95 Sergiovanni, Synodical Schools, and Servant Leadership

Sims summarizes leadership guru Thomas Sergiovanni's humanistic vision of education as a moral calling and thoughtfully proceeds to put Lutheran flesh on that vision.

by Carolyn C. Sims

100 Changes in the Leadership Role of the Missouri Synod's District Education Executive

Newly retired from the position, Kirchhoff reflects on his 23 years of service as a district education executive. He provides insight into the many adjustments that have been made in the leadership roles performed by those that have held and continue to hold the office.

by W. James Kirchhoff

113 A Leadership Challenge: Horace Mann and Religion in Public Schools

Reviewing an 1846 conflict between Horace Mann and the Reverend Matthew Hale Smith over religion in the common schools, Buck attempts to further inform discussions on the general challenges of leadership.

by Thomas M. Buck

124 Adiaphora and Organizational Vitality: Stimulating Innovations and Preserving Core Teachings

Building on organizational research, and using a series of historical examples from American religion, Finke argues that the most enduring and successful churches have successfully guarded their core beliefs as they have found innovative ways to accommodate to new times and cultures. He concludes with a brief discussion of the implications for the LCMS.

by Roger Finke

The Challenges of Leadership

From Where I Sit

by William C. Rietschel, Editor

In giving thought to this editorial on leadership, I hit both the library and the Internet research sites. I found that leadership has been investigated, poked, and prodded. But I also discovered no universally held definition of leadership yet exists, despite repeated claims by leadership gurus and consultants to the contrary. George Heider makes the same point in this issue's "A Final Word," though he recognizes a great leader when he sees one. If we can't agree on a definition of leadership, however, we can agree on one thing—it's a difficult time to be a leader. The authority, legitimacy, and integrity of leadership of every type are in question today.

In addition, the perplexing nature of issues, both spiritual and temporal, that impact religious leadership presents additional questions. Roger Finke's examination in this issue of how successful churches have maintained their core beliefs while discovering new means to adapt to contemporary realities provides one pivotally instructive example.

It seems to me that in addition to the absence of a definition of leadership, we overemphasize temporal leadership issues at the expense of reflection on leadership's spiritual aspects. For this reason, I think, the nuggets contained in Kevin Brockberg's creative offering merit its lead position among the articles in this issue of *Lutheran Education*.

However, as Tom Buck's article indirectly testifies, spiritual and temporal issues surrounding leadership have been around for a long time—certainly even longer than the mid-nineteenth century conflict he examines between Horace Mann and The Reverend Matthew Hale Smith. While Buck believes readers may glean different lessons from the article, achieving good communication with those who hold opposing viewpoints appears to be one lesson those in leadership roles might learn. Mann's haughtiness in responding to Smith brings to mind an occurrence of some years ago, when hotel magnate Leona Helmsley, expressing some of the arrogance that power and notoriety typically exhibit, said, "Only little people pay taxes." Leaders in Lutheran education need to demonstrate efficacy and trustworthiness, but they also need to show goodwill and love toward those that they lead. And while no universal definition of leadership exists, Scripture does offer some interesting perspectives on the challenges of leadership.

In our pluralistic world, we are challenged like the Israelites whom Joshua addressed: "choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15). We are called to respond as the people of Israel did: "We will serve the Lord our God and obey

(Joshua 24:24). Like Joshua and the Israelites, leaders in Lutheran education need to hold a clear vision about the way ahead. This is crucial to effective leadership.

St. Paul explored another aspect of leadership in Ephesians, insisting that leadership then and today is rooted in the relationship of trust (5:21-33). This is the point of his admonition that we “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21). Only the mystery of love, he urges, is able to cement the bonds between us. Only loving trust can help us really work together effectively.

Jesus expresses the heart of the issue of leadership in the fact that as we are joined with God in Christ we are nurtured and brought to real life. In the miracle of union with Christ through the Holy Spirit we are joined with Christ. Then we discover that the life we have in Christ is the only complete reality to which we should cling. We are to become like Peter when he said he was not offended by the teaching of Jesus but wanted to be with Christ: “You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:68-69).

How does this apply to Lutheran educators and the leadership we exercise in ministry? First and foremost, we must look to the example of Christ. As Carolyn Sims, points out in this issue, addressing one leadership guru’s vision of education as a moral calling, we can all benefit from following Jesus’ example in our service to the church. As simplistically as it often comes across, the current popular motto, “What would Jesus do?” is not a bad question to ask oneself. The world Jesus encountered was just as entangled with conflict and challenge as is ours. Jim Kirchhoff references a number of these contemporary conflicts and challenges in his offering to this issue, exploring the changing leadership role of the district education executive. But Jesus showed that if we meet our world with love, integrity, and character, even the blind, dumb, and mute get the message that the power and promise of God are present. That power and promise proclaims the Kingdom of God has come near to us, and this gives us life! We can feel the reality and truth of that proclamation. And, as Kirchhoff also reminds the reader, in this there is hope and the realization that the world can be changed through the power of God. Second, Jesus showed us that we must seek the will of God in the leadership we offer in ministry. If it is God’s will that a mountain be moved, it’s going to happen. As we look at some of the massive mountains that cast shadows over our lives, we need to remember that we have God’s companionship as we scale these difficult problems. When we say “thy will be done,” we affirm that surmounting these obstacles is not a solitary quest. And finally, we need to remain firm in our resolve. It seems almost incredible to some in our world, but the bottom line is that commitments count even when they are not convenient. May we all remember that the love of Christ, a will guided by the Holy Spirit, and firm commitment brings leadership to life.

We who serve in the teaching ministry of the church increasingly appear to perceive our service as a call to battle. Rather than wearing a soldier’s armor, we need to clothe ourselves in the armor of humility, righteousness, and the undefeated love of God. We are challenged to integrity, love, and constancy in our efforts to minister to God’s people faithfully.✠

As Iron Sharpens Iron: Process and Reflections of Spiritual Leadership

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Proverbs 27.17

Kevin Brockberg has served all levels of Lutheran education in New Jersey, throughout the Midwest, and at the Hong Kong International School, and welcomes continued conversation at brockberg@worldnet.att.net.

As a group facilitator, I have relied upon a Full Value Contract to establish norms for participation in a sharing experience. Whether you "contract" with a group, or reflect introspectively, as you read this article:

- contribute mentally, emotionally, and spiritually,
- participate in a way so people are able to relax and feel comfortable,
- share your thoughts openly and honestly,
- listen to what others say, focus on their ideas, and
- be open to outcomes, support, and the work of the Holy Spirit today.

Abandoning defenses opens one's heart and mind to understanding. I invite you to consider the following wholesome remark:

Our church's real challenge in the next decade or two is to find out how we change from being congregations of pretense to being healing communities; we have to work toward becoming

the kind of communities where it is safe to tell your life story. (Hartung, 2000, p. 10)

Genesis: The Calling

Too feeble to walk, too old to drive, too poor to fly, and too stubborn to ask for help, George Straight's angst is how to visit his ailing brother across the state line. *The Straight Story* begins with both unstated and misunderstood reasons for the determined garden tractor trip.¹ Examine the background and reasons for your calling to this ministry. Your genesis may not be at all unlike Anne Bradstreet's conversation between two sisters:

In the secret place where once I stood,
Close by the banks of lacrym flood,
I heard two sisters reason on
Things that are past and things to come.
One Flesh was called, who had her eye
On worldly wealth and vanity;
The other Spirit, who did rear
Her thoughts unto a higher sphere.

Anne Bradstreet, "The Flesh and the Spirit"

1. Analyze the symbolism for spiritual leaders as portrayed in *The Straight Story* or as expressed in "The Flesh and the Spirit."
2. Where did you first serve in Lutheran education?
3. What is the reason for choosing Lutheran education as your profession? In what ways has this been a good decision?
4. How do you feel about these statements from a recent edition of *Lutheran*

¹This article originated at the Principals of Large Schools conference in January, 2001. If shared as designed, in a group setting, I hope the nuggets presented will prompt the same degree of personal reflection and cohort benefit the administrators in attendance experienced at that conference. Mining meaning from movie clips and prospecting commentary from texts and journals (many from synodical publications), the ore of personal understanding is refined to a new luster for the Lutheran educator. Should the reader be unable to view the cited vignettes from the videos, poems of the same theme have been added to the original presentation to venture individually into these facets of spiritual leadership.

Education?

- I have come to the conclusion that the biggest issue hurting our Synod and its effectiveness in ministry is the way we treat one another—in other words, it is an issue of how we live out our doctrine. (Kober, 2000, p. 15)
- Our church worker shortage is directly related to how we treat one another. (Kober, p. 13)

Journey: The Plan

As *The Straight story* introduction fades, the tractor slowly rolls along the forlorn country road. You navigate a Christian enterprise, be it a school or a classroom, with a history of harvest and a hope for bountiful blessings. You have an objective, a goal.

Who are the key players in your game plan? How does your team prepare for the “plan of attack”? Lee Marvin coaches his

convicts to a precise plan

of action in *The Dirty Dozen*; the twelve recite the rhyme until they parachute from the airplane to the point of attack. Their plan is to destroy; Carl Sandburg recognizes the higher plane of deconstruction, complementing the importance of a firm foundation as one prepares to lead:

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls.
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights into white stars.

Carl Sandburg, “Prayers of Steel”

You navigate a Christian enterprise, be it a school or a classroom, with a history of harvest and a hope for bountiful blessings.

1. Analyze the symbolism for spiritual leaders as portrayed in *The Dirty Dozen* or as

expressed in “Prayers of Steel.”

2. Would you know a good leader if you met one? Consider the reflections of Doug Heath (1994) on seeking capable classroom teachers who have:
developed high competence in several areas . . . who create caring and loving relationships . . . they should be contagiously enthusiastic . . . who overflow with goodness . . . who accept and trust themselves and others enough to laugh at themselves. (p. 275)
3. Would you know a good leader if you met one? Consider the reflections of Marci Bruggen, principal of Linwood Elementary in Okalahoma City:
My job is to keep a clear focus on what it takes to maintain a high level of learning for each child. I “manage” the activities of the school to allow teachers the time and energy to carry out their instructional duties. Interruptions are kept to a minimum; long- and short-term plans are carefully laid out; and productive learning, “time on task” is guarded. Employing strong teachers, setting high expectations, and arguing for and supporting professional development and programs that meet staff and student needs are followed up with frequent (daily and more) “checking in” on what goes on in every area of the school. Just as important as “checking” is doing whatever is necessary to affirm, adjust or improve the situation. I am visible about the school, see kids for good reasons routinely, and know about each child’s learning to help plan programs, support parent-teacher interaction, and celebrate small successes as well as big ones. (Olson, 2000, p. 17)
4. Who is crucial to your successful embrace with the future in your school?
5. With whom, and in what ways, do you develop and catalyze spiritual insight and excellence in your Lutheran school setting?

Obstacles: The Expected and Unexpected

Comics and cartoons entertain and also educate. Dr. Seuss and Charles Schultz spin simple truths about life with their clever craft of pen and prose. Now computers create digital characters; *Toy Story 2* endears Woody and Buzz to us. Woody is kidnapped, and it’s toys to the rescue! Buzz takes command, declaring, “only nineteen blocks to go.” The toys know what was ahead of them, the expected; what little did they know as they came to cross the busy street in the cone sequence? What little does the speeding ship know of Walt Whitman’s emulous seas (bearing perhaps a *Perfect Storm*)?

Lo, the unbounded sea,

On its breast a ship starting, spreading all sails, carrying even her mainsails,

The pennant is flying aloft as she speeds she speeds so stately—below emulous
waves press forward,

They surround the ship with shining curving motions and foam.

Walt Whitman, “The Ship Starting”

1. Analyze the symbolism for spiritual leaders as portrayed in *Toy Story 2*, or as expressed in “The Ship Starting.”
2. Share your response to this statement:
Any attempt to develop a “spirituality of education” is full of peril. It invites a host of resistances, distortions, and misunderstandings. Education is supposed to deal with the tangible reality of science and the marketplace. Spirituality is supposed to address an invisible world whose reality is dubious at best. (Palmer, 1993, p. 10)
3. In your role, what are some recent obstacles you expect(ed) to encounter? What was unexpected? How do/did you manage the unexpected?

Relationships: The Servant Leader

Much is demanded of the Lutheran educator: in the physical environment (an efficient office, an orderly classroom), as an instructional leader (cutting-edge curricula), and for a spiritual ethos (impacting how people relate in their faith to the Lord, the school, themselves, and other people). It is difficult to grasp the expanse of these dimensions; it is a tough road to travel, for there is so much that Whitman identifies as unseen, yet so necessary to know:

Your road I enter upon and look around, I believe you are not all that is here,
I believe that much unseen is also here.

Here the profound lesson of reception, no preference or denial,
The black with his wooly head, the felon, the diseas'd, the illiterate person, are
not denied,
The birth, the hasting after the physician, the beggar's tramp, the drunkards
stagger, the laughing party of mechanics,
The escaped youth, the rich person's carriage, the fop, the eloping couple,
The early market-man, the hearse, the moving of furniture into the town, the
return back from the town,
They pass, I also pass, any thing passes, none can be interdicted,
None but are accepted, none but shall be dear to me.

Walt Whitman, “Song of the Open Road”

As Iron Sharpens Iron

1. What kind of person, of what character, do you think your ideal Lutheran school needs to perpetuate the journey, and navigate the obstacles?
2. What insight does this research provide the spiritual leader?
 - The servant leader displays *foresight* . . .
 - The servant leader is committed to the *growth of people* . . .
 - The servant leader has an ability to *conceptualize* . . .
 - The servant leader has highly developed powers of *persuasion* . . .
 - The servant leader *listens* receptively to what others have to say . . .
 - The servant leader demonstrates *acceptance* of others . . .
 - The servant leader shows *awareness* and perception . . .
 - The servant leader builds *community* . . .
 - The servant leader practices *stewardship* . . .
 - The servant leader has the ability to exert *healing* influence upon individuals and institutions . . . (Stueber, 2000, pp. 51-53).
3. In what areas do you need, or need help, to grow as a spiritual leader?
4. Share your opinion of this statement:
 - We will find truth not in the fine points of our theologies or in our organizational allegiances, but in the quality of our relationships. (Palmer, 1993, p. 50)

Identity: The Self

Tom Hanks is served orders: *Saving Private Ryan*. He dutifully commits himself to the task, selects a band of soldiers for the mission, and encounters many obstacles and setbacks along the journey. As Hanks is somewhat distant, the men in his command establish a pool and try to discover his origins. In their methodical search for Ryan, a German is captured after killing one of the company, and the tension mounts as the commandos determine his fate—to hold him as prisoner or to kill him. It is a pivotal question in this drama; Whitman (once again) questions the plot and plight of life:

O me! O life! Of the questions of these recurring,
Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more
faithless?)
Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects, mean, of the struggle ever
renew'd,
Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me,
Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,

The question, O me! So sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life?

Answer

That you are here—that life exists and identity,

That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.

Walt Whitman, "O me! O life!"

When Hanks identifies himself as a schoolteacher from Pennsylvania, fully human, authentic and transparent, that is the moment the group assays and unifies. The tension dissipates with a true identity, a humble and meek self cements these GI's into a tight, determined unit. The "powerful play" does go on. Life carries so many responsibilities, "that you are here . . . you may contribute a verse." The greatest contributions result when one identifies himself or herself as uniquely human, "intertwined" and cognizant that "much unseen is also here" (previously from "Song of the Open Road").

Today's battlefield is not France and the cause of democracy. It is the fierce war of deconstruction of both the self and truth. In the Postmodern Age, "the intellect is replaced by the

Today's battlefield is not France and the cause of democracy. It is the fierce war of deconstruction of both the self and truth.

will. Reason is replaced by emotion. Morality is replaced by relativism" (Veith, 1994, p. 28). Further, the "political and legal culture . . . presses the religiously faithful to be other than themselves . . . as though their faith does not matter to themselves" (Carter, 1993, p. 3).

1. "The postmodernist attacks on individual identity and universal human values are not merely academic exercises. How the intellectual establishment thinks about human beings reflects how ordinary people are affected by the contemporary condition . . . a major force in the shaping of the postmodern mind is the impact of contemporary technology" (Veith, 1994, p. 80). What concerns do you hold for the "contemporary condition" of humankind? What forces, foes and traumas confront those within your Christian learning community?
2. What are some of the resources you have for a counter-offensive to postmodern deconstruction?

Providence and Prowess: The Word and Prayer

John records the last hours Jesus shares with his disciples in chapters 14-17 of his Gospel. As their Rabbi and Lord, He teaches and then prays for them, and continues to lead us and pray for us today. The film *Jesus of Nazareth* reconstructs the scene in the upper room.

1. Analyze the importance of the words Jesus speaks in the upper room sequence from *Jesus of Nazareth*, or from your own treasured verses from John 14-17, as well as other passages from Scripture.
2. What do you think about your involvement with the Word and prayer? The involvement of your faculty and ministry leaders?
3. As you share these final reflections, allow some time for prayer, using what you have shared in these facets of spiritual leadership as a guide.

Postscript

Here is the insight most central to spiritual experience: we are known in detail and depth by the love that created and sustains us, known as members of a community of creation that depends on us and on which we depend. This love knows our limits as well as our potential, our capacity for evil as well as for good, the persistent self-centeredness with which we exploit the community for our own ends. Yet, as love, it does not seek to confine or manipulate us. Instead, it offers us the constant grace of self-knowledge and acceptance that can liberate us to a larger love (Palmer, 1993, p. 11).

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4.6-7).✠

References

- Bryce, I., Gordon, M., & Levinsohn, G. (Producers) & Spielberg, S. (Director). (1998). *Saving private Ryan* [Motion picture]. United States: Dream-works SKG/Paramount Pictures.
- Carter, S. L. (1993). *The culture of disbelief: How American law and politics trivialize religious devotion*. NY: Doubleday.
- Edelstein, N., Sarde, A., & Sweeney, M. (Producers) & Lynch D. (Director). (1999). *The Straight story* [Motion picture]. United States: Disney
- Ellmann, R. (1976). *The new Oxford book of American verse*. NY: Oxford.
- Hartung, B. (2000). Congregations: Channels of health and healing. *Issues in*

Christian Education, 34, 7-11.

Heath, D. (1994). *Schools of hope: Developing mind and character in today's youth*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass

Hyman, K. (Producer) & Aldrich, R. (Director). (1967). *The Dirty Dozen* [Motion picture]. United States: MGM.

Jackson, K. R., & Plotkin, H. (Producers) & Lassiter, J. (Director). (1999). *Toy story 2* [Motion picture]. United States: Disney.

Kober, T. (2000). How we treat one another in the church. *Lutheran Education*, 136, 6-20.

Labella, V. (Producer) & Zeffirelli, F. (Director). (1977). *Jesus of Nazareth* [Motion picture]. Italy/United Kingdom: RAI/ITC.

Olson, L. (2000, November 1). Telling it like it is. *Education Week*, 20, 17.

Palmer, P. J. (1993). *To know as we are known: Education as a spiritual journey*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Sandburg, C. *The complete poems of Carl Sandburg*. NY: Harcourt.

Stueber, R. (2000). Making a difference with servant leadership. *Lutheran Education*, 136, 49-55.

Veith, G. E. (1994). *Postmodern times: A Christian guide to contemporary thought and culture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Whitman, W. (1993). *Leaves of grass*. NY: Barnes & Noble.

“There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.”

Niccolo Machiavelli

Sergiovanni, Synodical Schools, and Servant Leadership

Carolyn Sims serves as principal at Abiding Savior Lutheran School in Lake Forest, CA. She holds a B.S. from Concordia Nebraska, an M.A.Ed. from Concordia Irvine, and is completing doctoral work in educational leadership through Concordia, River Forest. Her previous publications include curricular and devotional materials for CPH and School Ministries and the books Winning Friends for Christ and Milk and Cookies for the Soul.

Thomas J. Sergiovanni, Professor and Senior Fellow, Center for Educational Leadership at Trinity University, and noted educator and writer, encourages teachers and administrators to view education as a moral calling. He asserts that education is on a different plane than any other model of organization. It is more than a business. It is deeper than a job. It involves people at their best and most noble engaging in tasks beyond that which can be measured and accomplishing together what no one could ever do alone. In contrast to an impersonal and institutionalized “Gesellschaft,” he sees the ideal educational community as “Gemeinschaft,” an organism which seeks to look beyond self and work toward the common good. He sees the components of an educational community working together in structural functionalism—each one playing its part, specifically suited and equipped, for the good of all. Sergiovanni wants us to do what is necessary, not because we will personally benefit from it but because it is right. Then, as society is benefitted by these altruistic acts and attitudes, each person is benefitted as well. He sees schools as a culture of inquiry and supportive symbiotic relationships based on shared

morally uplifting and altruistic core values. He believes schools should be places where moral decisions are contemplated and form the basis for action, and as places where teachers, students, and parents form partnerships to pass basic learning and culture on to others. Schools, he believes, should teach noble character traits to children and motivate them to put these traits into practice—cultivating moral behavior and a sense of commitment which perpetuates these traits in future generations.

Sergiovanni values reflective thought and espouses a constructivist philosophy. He believes that people are moral beings who, when given appropriate experiences and led by honest inquiry, have the capacity to construct meaningful and moral conclusions. Sergiovanni's ideal schoolhouse transcends mere words. He is clearly a visionary. The ideal he sets forth makes one wonder if attainment is possible within the realm of human capabilities.

Lutheran Schools and Sergiovanni's Vision

As Lutheran educators read Sergiovanni, we are caught up in his vision. Surely Lutheran schools, more than any other, put flesh on Sergiovanni's dream. We, too, are committed to servant

and moral leadership. His goals are our goals.

Lutheran schools were formed to teach God's Word to children and apply it to their daily

lives. Luther saw the education of children as a necessary and God-

pleasing endeavor. In America, Lutherans established schools at the same time they established churches as a means of educating children in the morals and customs of the Lutheran community. Children were taught the German work ethic along with the German language and a commitment to obey the Ten Commandments, honor authority, and serve others. They were trained in a structural functionalistic philosophy—each one expected to do his/her part for the good of the family, church, and community. Self-serving was considered prideful and was strongly discouraged. Surely this system was "Gemeinschaft" at its best.

The educational system that developed, however, did not always meet the ideals envisioned by Sergiovanni. It was often a rule-driven, guilt-laden society in which the

Surely Lutheran schools, more than any other, put flesh on Sergiovanni's dream. We, too, are committed to servant and moral leadership.

teacher was the authority and inquiry was frowned upon. Teachers were literal servants of the church economically—living largely on the charity of congregational members and expected to depend on divine provision rather than assert any personal needs or desires.

Christ as Servant Leader

Clearly, moral and servant leadership is more than a commitment to moral principles. It is more than a dream that we make happen by sheer wish or will. As always, we learn by looking first at the example and directives of Jesus. He demonstrated the ideal of servant leadership when he gave up his rightful glory and took on the form of a servant, dedicating his life to helping others, even if it killed him—which it did. His life and death were more than an example, however. By his death and resurrection he dealt with our sinful human nature, which impairs our most altruistic desires, and gave us a reason for wanting to demonstrate our love for him by serving those whom he loves. He also gave his people a mission—to tell others about him so that all could know his saving grace. Lutheran schools and their teachers are truly effective when, empowered by the Holy Spirit, their motivation is to serve the God who redeemed them by leading others to know him, too. In that light, servant leadership takes on a new dimension.

C.F.W. Walther, in his treatise on Law and Gospel, clarified and expounded on the relationship between faith and works. He made it clear that serving others and leading a moral life is a response to the Gospel. One cannot establish a moral climate in a school simply by telling children and teachers what is right and wrong or by enforcing strict rules. Motivation to care for others and follow moral guidelines comes from applying the Gospel to the lives of those who serve and those who are served.

The Lutheran Educator and Servant Leadership

Who are the great educational leaders in the church? We think of pioneers like Luther and Walther and of synodical and university legends. But I am equally inspired by people I know who work in the church at great personal sacrifice—missionaries who face health problems, humble educators who labor for years without accolade or tangible reward, teachers who patiently do what needs to be done for as long as it takes without their efforts even being noticed by most. Their servanthood leads the way. Their example motivates and encourages others.

What is your story? Probably no one but God is aware of the personal sacrifices you make each day because you choose to serve in a Lutheran school. And the

legacy continues. Children who are privileged to be taught by such people are often inspired to follow their example.

Teachers in Christian schools are called to serve there and see themselves as a part of the total mission and ministry of the Church. Like Sergiovanni, they have the understanding that schools are much more than a business or a social organization.

Instead, Lutheran schools are based on common core values of adherence to God's Word and to the love he directs us to share with others. Core values in Lutheran schools are clearly articulated, which is an advantage because they can operate on that common ground.

Lutheran schools also are grounded in seeing themselves as a community in which everyone works together for the good of the whole. Based on Scriptural passages such as Romans 12, we follow St. Paul's example of a body with

many parts, each part equally valued and equally necessary for the body's welfare. In addition, we believe these gifts are intentionally created for service by the God who directs his Church at large.

The main contrasts between Sergiovanni's model and the Lutheran understanding of servant leadership and moral leadership are the motivation to establish it and the expectation of achieving it. While Sergiovanni looks to humanistic ideals, Lutheran educators realize that the power to establish such communities comes from God, and we live in his forgiveness as we struggle with human frailties.

A Lutheran Perspective on Servant Leadership

Servant leadership from a Lutheran point of view means that church leaders are to have the "mind of Christ." We don't have to prove that we are always right. We can listen to other points of view. We can care about and for people whether or not they "deserve" it because we are all equally in need of God's grace and equally valued as his children. In Lutheran schools, children are also taught this attitude and are encouraged to practice valuing and serving others. As a result, the school

community can enjoy many of the benefits Sergiovanni espouses. Like Sergiovanni, Lutheran educators see the vision of an ideal school community in which people are engaged in supportive and nurturing relationships, doing what is right and helpful to society, and passing on this morally rich culture to future generations,

The main contrasts between Sergiovanni's model and the Lutheran understanding of servant leadership and moral leadership are the motivation to establish it and the expectation of achieving it. While Sergiovanni looks to humanistic ideals, Lutheran educators realize that the power to establish such communities comes from God, and we live in his forgiveness as we struggle with human frailties. We seek to serve as a response to God's love for us—not really looking at sacrifices of time or emotion or money as negatives, but seeing them as necessary for more important goals. For the same reason, while we hold the vision as the ideal, we continue to live the meanwhile without becoming discouraged. Lutheran schools are laboratories in Christian discipleship. We celebrate every success and model Law and Gospel as they play out in daily life.

Most servants don't consider themselves leaders. They are so focused on meeting the needs at hand that they never look back to see if they are being followed. They are. Just as they follow Christ, others follow them. Sergiovanni's ideal schoolhouse is one many Lutheran educators know well. They have been taught there. They continue to learn there. That is where they serve, and that is where they lead.†

References

- Sergiovanni, T. (1996) *Leadership for the schoolhouse*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Sergiovanni, T. & Starratt, R. (1998). *Supervision: A redefinition*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Walther, C. F. W. (1928). *The proper distinction between law and gospel*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

Changes in the Leadership Role of the Missouri Synod's District Education Executive

Dr. W. James Kirchhoff recently retired as Education Executive for Lutheran schools in the Northern Illinois District of the LCMS. He received his BA from Concordia in River Forest, his MA from the University of Chicago, and the doctorate from Northern Illinois University. A past president of LEA, he previously served Illinois parishes in Chicago, Park Forest, and Naperville as a teacher, principal, athletic director, organist and choir director.

In May of 1979 I received the call to serve as education executive for Lutheran schools of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's (LCMS) Northern Illinois District (NID). I accepted the call the following month. As was the case in three previous stations of service, my initial response to this call was negative. A positive response came about through the direction of the Holy Spirit. Encouragement from friends, colleagues, and family also served as oracles of direction. They said, "Go." Much has changed since that time.

Origins and Evolution of the Position

In the mid-nineteenth century, soon after the LCMS was founded, Synod's national conventions were regularly memorialized to establish the position of "school inspector." These memorials were clearly indicators of a desire to establish high standards of instruction in congregational schools. Not until 1918, however, did the first Missouri Synod district, the NID, call a school superintendent (Schwartzkopf, 1950).

The Leadership Role of District Education Executives

About ten other districts followed the NID's lead during the next several years (Kramer, 1975). These school executives gathered for an initial conference at Concordia, River Forest in 1921 (Stellhorn, 1963) and have met yearly as a group called the Conference of Education Executives (CONFEDEx) ever since. One of the early district education executives was August C. Stellhorn of the Central District, which at that time included the states of Indiana and Ohio. In April of 1921 he became the first Superintendent of Lutheran Schools for the LCMS (Stellhorn, 1958).

District school executives regularly visited schools and were regarded as expert generalists. School visits today are still carried out by education executives or their chosen representatives. However, since the implementation of the National Lutheran School Accreditation process in the late 1970's, school visitation teams and the local self-study groups establish school improvement plans. Visits by a district official now focus on the progress of a school in addressing the recommendations of the accreditation visiting team. The purpose of district education executives' visits to schools today is to affirm the ministries of the professional church workers, especially the principal. Congregations and pastors are also encouraged to continue their support of these institutions.

Shifting Challenges

When district education positions first came into existence, the individuals called to fill them were confronted with congregations threatened by a secular society that regarded them as unpatriotic. Contributing to this societal perception was the fact that the German language was still used in many Missouri Synod schools. In addition, during the 1920's public antagonism questioning the right of any religious-based school to exist reached its peak. The Supreme Court of the nation addressed this latter issue in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* in 1925, indicating that children could attend a school other than the public school (Everhart, 1982). The economic collapse of the 1930's found a century-old church body with financial limitations similar to those being experienced by other institutions, both secular and non-secular. The 1940's required a Synodical president's intervention with the Selective Service to maintain availability of male teachers. The result of this intervention was the declaration of exempt status from the draft because synodically trained male teachers were classified as "ministers of religion" (Stellhorn, 1963, p. 464). Our church's doctrine of the ministry continues to be an unresolved controversy, though in some circles it is considered resolved. Since the early 1950's demographic shifts with the growth of suburbs, changes in urban ethnic and racial makeup, and the failure of many congregations to deal with these dynamics, has resulted in no end of district

executive's time being spent with parishes needing to address these matters. District presidents have also been involved with congregations wrestling with these concerns. Chicago congregations in 1950, for example, numbered 47 with day schools (Dorn, 1950). Today 17 of these schools are still in operation, although four more are now affiliated with other Lutheran church bodies (Kirchhoff, 2001). Also, I have watched twelve collar suburban congregations close their schools. The congregation's demise is often not far behind, unless a few financially able families choose to maintain it.

Conflicts

Now, as I retire and reflect on 23 years of service as a district school executive, I must confess that there were days I wish I had stayed in the parish. God knows better. The parish schools have experienced a growing number of conflicted relationships. Parental expectations, strained staff relationships, school board interventions and classroom accountability for pupil achievement are but a few of the strains on achieving joy-filled ministries. Granted, some of these tensions can result in good.

Furthermore, these pressures have always existed. It's the frequency and intensity that seems to have proliferated. Thankfully, a number of intervention programs have become available for use by district executives in recent years. Two examples are Peacemakers and Strengthening Schools and Congregations. How thankful we are that these mediations are rooted with the direction of the Holy Scriptures (Sande, 1997).

Since the early 1950's demographic shifts with the growth of suburbs, changes in urban ethnic and racial makeup, and the failure of many congregations to deal with these dynamics, has resulted in no end of district executive's time being spent with parishes needing to address these matters. District presidents have also been involved with congregations wrestling with these concerns.

Funding

When I began my district service in 1979, I was unalterably opposed to tuition for members as a means for school support. My congregation implemented it the year after I left. I have completely reversed my position regarding this issue. I now feel that member tuition is inevitable in most situations. There are immense variances in congregational budgets. Some urban settings provide less than five percent of their budget in school support. Some suburban congregations spend 70% of their church budget in support of the school. My assessment of the latter congregations is that they are probably placing most of their “eggs in one basket.” Might there be a youth director, a family life staff member, or other called leader needed for supporting congregational life? Certainly, each situation is unique, but as a rule of thumb, my sense of things suggests that 40% of the church’s budget should be a maximum support level for a school.

A financial support resource in the NID is the Good News Fund of the Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation (CLEF). Totally operated by laity with a love for Lutheran schools, this organization has contributed many thousands of dollars to our Chicago Lutheran schools for over 10 years. A major beneficiary of CLEF has been our Lutheran Special Education Ministry, which has placed special education teachers into over 40 schools in the district. God moved the foundation to contribute over \$185,000 in 2001 (The Report, 2001). Urban schools throughout the country will likely not survive without this kind of continued support in future years. More importantly, children with special needs will not develop their potential without this support. The number of such children continues to grow.

Another factor to consider, as I view the inevitability of member tuition, is the continued decrease of available support from the elderly who throughout their years were advocates, financially and vocally, of Lutheran schools. Those saints quite simply are dying and, unless they are gifting schools in death, another source of support will be found wanting. Shrewd planners are establishing local foundations in recognition of this trend.

Salaries

Related to funding support is the critical issue of teachers’ salaries. The average beginning salary for Lutheran schoolteachers is about \$19,758 (Stueber, 2001). One Chicago area suburban public school begins its teachers at \$40,627 (D. Schusteff, personal communication, October 12, 2001). A Lutheran schoolteacher’s salary with

ten years experience and a master's degree averages \$22,249 (Stueber, 2001).¹ Clearly Lutheran experiential scales and degree attainment scales lag seriously behind those of public schools. Some congregations, however, do make valiant efforts to match local public school salary scales. What has caused an even greater gap in recent years is the cost of health care for church workers. Even in extending this benefit, about one-half of LCMS congregations with schools in my district have gone to a "worker only" benefit (Petersen, 1999).

When members of congregations determine to abandon the practice of "family" support for the workers, they often do so by noting their own employers having implemented such practices. Frequently they do not consider the disparate comparison of their salaries with that of their teachers and pastor(s). This issue is becoming much more of a significant factor in considering a call to a new station. The age-old perspective, "The Lord will provide," is still a mind-set held by many church workers, but when a \$30,000 salary suddenly becomes \$23,000 when family health benefits must be absorbed, reality dictates factoring in consideration of these diminishing benefits.

Commissioned ministers (teachers) are defined by law as self-employed and are therefore required to pay self-employment tax in lieu of social security. They pay 15.3% to the Internal Revenue Service quarterly. Non-commissioned teachers have 7.65% deducted for their social security and the congregation is required to pay the other portion of their social security. Some commissioned ministers have resigned their roster status, thereby necessitating the congregation paying 7.65% into the social security system due to their status as a lay teacher. This financial pressure to resign roster status is an unfortunate development. The need or choice to do this could be eliminated if the congregation would pay the 7.65% directly to the commissioned minister over and above the regular salary just as they do for a non-commissioned teacher. In reality, resigning one's roster status is not a wise practice for a commissioned worker, unless he or she is the spouse of another professional church worker, since the housing allowance is made available to one household.

Staffing

Current challenges regarding staffing are clearly related to the national problem of teacher shortages. A recent Synod-wide study notes salary as the second-most

¹This figure is apparently a statistical glitch or a printing error, because previous years report a higher average. The figure is likely \$32,249.

The Leadership Role of District Education Executives

significant contributor to job dissatisfaction with the first being administrator-staff member relationships (Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support, 2001). At the December 2000 gathering of CONFEDX, the Synodical School Ministry Department's report indicated that the LCMS had lost 600 teachers the previous school year. They were replaced with 315 newly commissioned ministers. At the elementary level, only 31 of these were men (Stueber, 2000). Currently 22 of the 76 elementary school principals in the NID are women (Kirchhoff, 2001). With statistics like these, one can see the shift in gender leadership in the future. When I began teaching 45 years ago, teachers' conference singing sounded almost like a male chorus. Today the hymnody sounds like a mixed choir with a strong soprano section.

Of the 24 principalship changes in my district in 2001, 12 were filled with interim leadership. Six principals were former public school educators who retired early from the public sector. Two loved their new roles so much that they enrolled in the Synodical colloquy program. Both were over 50 years of age. Four interim principals were the parish pastors.

As this is being written, the School Ministry Department of Synod's Board for District and Congregational Services has completed two School Leadership Development (SLed) training workshops for aspiring administrators. A third workshop, nearly three weeks in length, was to be completed in June of 2002. Fifty-two participants completed the second of these workshops.

Procedures for calling and contracting teachers and administrators have changed considerably in the past 20 years. In my 1979 job description was the charge, "Serve as District Placement Officer." Each year the district executives would gather and match teacher candidates from Synodical colleges with requests from parishes. These "open" calls would surprise graduates on call night. This procedure has evolved into a process whereby congregations contact the college placement office. The graduate and parish call committee are frequently given the opportunity to interview one another to agree upon a possible match. The candidate often has a choice to make, just as an experienced teacher. Sadly, many large urban congregations come up short in this process. In support of the old procedure, I must say that my assignment as a first-grade teacher would never have been my choice, but what a marvelous experience it turned out to be. And, when I later became a principal for two decades, I was able to speak from experience with primary teachers. (It also, incidentally, was the parish where I met my wife.)

Candidate Lists

All district education executives are charged with developing teacher candidate

lists for congregations in the process of calling. This service resulted in the development of lists ranging from 10 to 12 candidates in years past, with the peak request period occurring from April through July. In 2001, many lists found no available candidates and the peak period was from December through May. Extreme shortages appear to exist at the early childhood level (especially for certified directors) and also for upper grade math and science teachers. Recently, a new search tool has become available called Ministry Profile Search Application (MPSA). With district executive approval, principals are allowed to explore names from the Synodical database by computer. They apply for this right and are given a new password each month. They receive from the database a Personnel Information Form (PEIF). The Lutheran Educator Information Form (LEIF) remains filed in the office of the district education executive and is

available upon request, assuming, of course, the candidate has submitted it. This procedure permits the education executive some oversight of information, which might preclude consideration of a candidate for teaching in certain situations.

Background checks, now required in public education, are recommended, but still are the responsibility and at the option of the parish. This practice, though repulsive to many, is a necessary precaution in our society today.

It is in the legal arena where Lutheran school operations have experienced some of the most profound change. A special burden is on the local Lutheran school principal. My own personal contacts with legal counsel have been much more frequent than in the past.

Legal Matters

It is in the legal arena where Lutheran school operations have experienced some of the most profound change. Legal matters have always been a factor in school leadership. The litany of concerns such as search and seizure, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, firearm incident reporting, inclusion, federal anti-discrimination laws, due process rights, student records access and content, and pupil rights are only a few of the multiplicity of legal issues which are now a part of school operation. A special

The Leadership Role of District Education Executives

burden is on the local Lutheran school principal. My own personal contacts with legal counsel have been much more frequent than in the past.

The Washington, D.C.-based Council for American Private Education (CAPE) has many state affiliates watching and assisting legislatures with laws impacting non-public schools. State level coalitions of 10 to 20 different private, independent, and parochial schools meet regularly to discuss potential or enacted legislation. Homeschoolers are also participants. The Roman Catholic Church constitutes the largest group in these endeavors, often employing lobbyists to carry out what they perceive to be in the best interests of their schools.

Many states have legislated benefits for private school students and parents in recent years. The loan of secular textbooks or software free of charge for pupils in Kindergarten through twelfth grade is now available. However, recipient schools must be in compliance with compulsory attendance laws and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Some church schools with strong church-state separation convictions do not avail themselves of these materials.

Another legal benefit entitles certain parents a payment as reimbursement for transportation to and from school. Parents must live more than 12 miles from the school and provide transportation at their own expense or live within 12 miles of school with hazardous walking conditions, such as a railroad crossing.

Some states have inaugurated the continued controversial program of school choice support or the education tax credit. Some Lutheran school education executives have been very much involved at their state level with these issues.

Non-public schools in many states have also been the beneficiaries of state-provided connections (ports) to the statewide educational network. This benefit, and others assisting so-called secular activities in non-public schools, will continue to find legal challenges from public school advocates and church-state separatists and require informed leadership from district education executives.

Technology

The technology explosion has surely brought on profound changes in school operation and communication. Schools are expanding resources to computerize management procedures and some instructional activities. So many unanswered questions and varied opinions relate to the applications of this awesome phenomenon. For example, is Kindergarten old enough to utilize computers or will their use result in social isolation, concentration problems, and repetitive stress injuries? Kindergartners may have their blocks, books, modeling clay, construction paper, paste, paint, singing, and dancing. But some also spend time on their

classroom's three Tandys, five Macs, and a GC Tower. Using a reading program, they write their own stories and hear the computer read their words back to them. They play counting games and create graphs.

Our district has established a technology task force to assist schools with development of technology applications. Schools are often rushing to be wired and to get computers into every classroom. The Synodical School Ministry Department has brought technology representatives from the districts together for an exchange of activities and services. Some of the representatives are education executives.

Another development resulting from technology that district education executives are also beginning to see as more commonplace is the use of distance learning to deliver in-service staff development. Already we note this development influencing whether a school staff sees some merit in traditional conferencing. Some large school faculties would rather address their professional growth needs in a smaller context of their own staff or with two or three schools a few miles from one another. Interaction can be more meaningful when participants have more in common.

On the other hand, the diversity of colleagues' classrooms, congregations, communities, and pupils may provide other kinds of growth. Furthermore, the social interaction at conferences can provide strong support for teachers to survive the multitude of challenges confronting them. Geographically compact districts with many schools have a growing number of teaching staffs questioning the cost, time, and content of over-night conferences. In large districts, composed of several states and a smaller number of schools, over-night conferences several hundred miles from the schools are important support sources for teachers. Social and professional interaction is welcomed.

Demographics

Significant changes have taken place in demographics for our church schools. We have significantly increased our enrollment nationally. Sixty percent of our pupils are from households not affiliated with the sponsoring church (Stueber, 2000, p. 3).

Ten years ago one in five of our early childhood teachers was Synod-certified; today one in 11 is so credentialed (Stueber, 2000, p. 6). In 1991, 70% of our elementary teachers were certified; in 2,000 it was 54% (Stueber, 2000, p. 6). In 1991 elementary school costs per pupil were about \$2,000; today the figure approaches \$4,000 (Stueber, 2000, p. 7). Before and after school care in 1991 numbered 4,000 children. Today there are 46,000 (Stueber, 2000, p. 1). These statistics require some different considerations in teaching, and many schools are carefully strategizing how to reach into the homes of the families without a church home. Some Lutheran schools are

The Leadership Role of District Education Executives

also cooperating with the growing number of parents who choose to homeschool their children. National figures number these students at 850,000 (Bast, 2001).

Diversity

Another change in student demographics that our schools are experiencing is the great diversity of cultures and races. One in eight pupils in NID Lutheran schools is African-American. Over half of these are not in the city of Chicago (Petersen, 2001). Furthermore, some demographers suggest that the Hispanic population may be larger than the black or African-American population in Chicago (Mendell & Washburn, 2001). One of our schools has children from 19 different ethnic backgrounds. These children often challenge our teachers in dealing with individual and family needs.

Societal Problems

A crucial factor in the lives of many children in our communities is parental divorce. Over the past two decades, more than 1 million children each year experience the divorce of their parents. Translated another way, divorce affects over one-fourth of our nation's children (Behrman & Quinn, 1994). Most often this development results in financial deprivation, especially if support is to come from the non-custodial father. Whatever family structure evolves, children still need assurance of God's love. The Lutheran schoolteacher must be aware of how to assist in the optimal growth and development of these children.

Divorce also occurs in families of the Lutheran teacher. District education executives and district presidents must be aware of these situations and their impact on a professional church worker's ministry. Certain circumstances may require resignation from a called position.

The impact of today's societal problems in our schools often requires district executives assisting a local school with facing the reality of the need to assure a safe environment for learning. Violence prevention and a drug-free environment should be addressed in policies. Classroom instruction, appropriate for the grade level, should deal with these matters. As much as we might find secured (locked) school buildings and video surveillance unpleasant, better judgment would dictate that these precautions are prudent.

Support

Education executives are often sought for counsel and support regarding a variety of school-related topics. Principals are looking for ideas about mentoring

teachers. Teachers are asking about certification requirements of their state. People raise questions about appropriate worship forms. Funding schools through grants, federal title programs, and alumni contacts are frequently raised concerns. Dealing with parents, especially with their often over-scheduled children, is a topic discussed by principals. The listing could go on and on.

However, the primary responsibility for affirmation of the teachers in our Lutheran schools rests on the shoulders of the local pastor and principal. The education executive can serve as a resource for the hundreds of teachers who serve within the district. The district education executive needs to make every effort to support the principal in

his or her task and encourage the pastor(s) to be a part of that support. This is especially true in the spiritual domain as the over-shepherding pastor builds up the teacher for the feeding of the Lambs of Christ. With the growing number of non-Synodically trained teachers in our

The district education executive needs to make every effort to support the principal in his or her task and encourage the pastor(s) to be a part of that support. This is especially true in the spiritual domain as the over-shepherding pastor builds up the teacher for the feeding of the Lambs of Christ.

schools, the districts and the School Ministry Department of the LCMS have developed a project called "Making Disciples." The modules can be used to acculturate and inform teachers about the uniqueness of Lutheran education. Modules can be used in a retreat setting, faculty staff development activity or in district sponsored workshops.

A relatively recent development related to pastoral responsibility for support of school personnel is the significant increase of second career pastors. Many are extremely school-oriented. Indeed, some of them are former Lutheran schoolteachers. However, it's my observation that a number of second career pastors do not exhibit an affinity for what Lutheran schools are about. A district education executive must give special attention to these pastors. The district president can also be a great source of support in dealing with this issue.

Uncertain Changes

Just as Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared December 7, 1941 as a day that would live in infamy, so might this be said of September 11, 2001. Dastardly acts of terrorism have already evidenced for us that life will never be the same. We have forever shifted, according to church historian Martin Marty (2001), from security to insecurity. Ordinary citizens of all classes and ranks have found their secure selves and surroundings shattered. We have only begun to contemplate how this will impact our schools. Clearly, a greater awareness of global involvement and sensitivity will be addressed. Heretofore, we have spoken of this awareness primarily in relation to the economy. We in the churches have related to it in our foreign mission involvement. Our institutions are now forced into greater teaching and learning about the mindsets inculcated by cultures much different than ours.

Finally, one aspect of change I often muse about is the growing disparity between poverty and immensity of wealth. We might consider using the example of Abraham who used his possessions in a generous manner. We don't have to search very far to find God-pleasing ways to serve God's people. We must hold this up before our children as an example.

Hope for the Future

The changes influencing Lutheran schools that I have observed and noted in this article have necessitated many adjustments in the leadership role of the district education executive. Funding, technology, family life structures, diversity, neuroscience research studies, and local parish needs will continue to impact change. As God gives us the strength and the wisdom, our Lutheran schools will continue to be a great resource for the growth of his Kingdom. A gem of Holy Scripture provides encouragement to us in these times: "I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you" (Jeremiah 29:11-13).†

References

- Bast, C. D. (Ed.). (2001, October). Survey: 850,000 students home schooled. *School Reform News*.
- Chicagoland Lutheran Education Foundation. (Fall, 2001). *The Report*. Palatine, IL.
- Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support of The Lutheran Church-Missouri

- Synod. (2001). *Data from Teacher 2000: A survey of teachers in the Lutheran school system*. [Power Point Presentation].
- Dorn, O. A. (Ed.). (1950). *The Lutheran annual*. St. Louis: CPH.
- Everhart, R. B. (1982). *The public school monopoly: A critical analysis of education and the state of American society*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinga Publishing.
- Kirchhoff, W. J. (Ed.). (2001). *Directory of Lutheran pre-schools, elementary, and high schools*, 55. Hillside, IL: Office of Christian Education, Northern Illinois District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
- Kramer, W. A. (1975). *Lutheran schools - 15 crucial years: History of the schools of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod from 1959-1973*. St. Louis: Board of Parish Education, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
- Marty, M. E. (2001). *Context: Martin E. Marty on religion and culture*. Chicago: Claretian Publications.
- Mendell, D. & Washburn, G. (2001, October 14). Race shifts seen in remap efforts: Leaders struggle to retain wards. *Chicago Tribune*.
- Petersen, D. J. (2000). [Summary of Northern Illinois District statistics compilation]. Unpublished raw data.
- Petersen, D. J. (2001). [Minority students in Northern Illinois District schools]. Unpublished raw data.
- Sande, K. (1997). *The peacemakers: A biblical guide to resolving personal conflict*. (3rd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Schwartzkoph, L. J. (1950). *The Lutheran trail: A history of the Synodical Conference Lutheran Churches in Northern Illinois*. St. Louis: CPH.
- Stellhorn, A. C. (1958). Autobiography, prepared for the class book issued by the 1908 graduates of the Evangelical Lutheran Teachers Seminary, Addison, Illinois, in commemoration of their 50th Anniversary.
- Stellhorn, A. C. (1963). *Schools of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*. St. Louis: CPH.
- Stueber, R. E. (Ed.). (2000). *Commissioned ministers: Salary averages by position, October 1999 - September 2000*. St. Louis: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Board for District and Congregational Services, Department of School Ministry.
- Stueber, R. E. (Ed.). (2001). *Statistical report summary: Schools and early childhood centers of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*. St. Louis: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Board for District and Congregational Services, Department of School Ministry.

A Leadership Challenge: Horace Mann and Religion in Public Schools

Thomas M. Buck is a graduate of Concordia, River Forest, IL, where he received a B.S. in Education. He earned a M.S. from the University of Alberta and his Ph.D. in Educational Policy and Leadership from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Buck began his career in education at Concordia College in Edmonton, Alberta. Currently, he is superintendent of The Lutheran High School Association of Greater Milwaukee, an organization he has served since 1968.

Everyone who ventures into the leadership arena faces challenges. The sources of those challenges are diverse, but there are common elements that make it difficult to accomplish the organizational mission. There may be challenges related to values, purpose, strategy, or content. Sometimes leaders believe they are dealing with the issue, only to discover that the duplicity of the challenger changes the issue.

Horace Mann, first Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, encountered his share of challenges and challengers. One well-known but often misunderstood challenge arose over religion in the common schools. Historical documents, primarily letters, still exist showing the nature of at least two of Mann's conflicts related to religion in the schools. One of these conflicts is reviewed below to inform further discussions on the general challenges of leadership.

Influences on Mann

Horace Mann, often known as the "Father of the

Common (Public) School,” was a complex person influenced by a wide variety of experiences. After a number of years in professional life as a lawyer in Massachusetts, Mann turned to politics and eventually served as president of the State Senate. He left that position to accept an appointment as Secretary of the Board of Education for the State of Massachusetts. As secretary of the board, he had no authority over the schools but was highly influential in all of education. At times his ideas and philosophies brought him into conflict with others.

Both societal and personal considerations influenced Mann’s religious thought. His family attended a Congregational church whose pastor, Nathanael Emmons, used the occasion of the accidental death of Mann’s brother to preach a sermon on dying unconverted to frighten young people into accepting Christ as Savior. Mann’s reaction to the sermon and the legalistic approach to Christianity became his excuse to favor the Universalist practices of the time. Mann was definitely Protestant in his understanding and support for religion, and he joined in on the anti-Papist positions of the day.

Background to the Conflict

One example of conflict over religion in the common schools is that between Mann and The Reverend Matthew Hale Smith, a Congregational minister. Examination of their written exchanges illustrates the essence of Mann’s position related to religion in the common schools as well as some of the misunderstanding of his position that may continue to influence current understanding of educational history.

For those currently engaged in educational leadership, the exchanges are reminiscent of the challenges encountered in achieving good communication with those who hold opposing points of view. Smith proved himself to be an elusive adversary who changed issues and accusations whenever confronted with information that showed his position to be incorrect. Surprisingly, Mann continued to pursue his written debate with Smith despite the relative unimportance of the man’s accusations in view of the overwhelming support most clergymen showed for Mann and the Board of Education.

Soon after his appointment as Secretary, Mann began publishing *The Common School Journal*, which he used to disseminate all kinds of information on various education-related topics. In the first issue, Mann described his views of religious and moral education. His philosophy of education was a tightly woven fabric with its threads made up of the virtues of good character, service, vision, humility, generosity, religion, and morality. Mann insisted that “The germs of morality must be planted in

the moral nature of children, at an early period of their life" (Mann, 1837). He believed the minds and hearts of children were fertile ground in which would grow the crops of whatever seeds were planted there, and he was absolutely convinced that, if children were given proper moral and religious education, they would grow into the citizens needed to maintain and develop the democracy of the great American states. He concluded,

If we would have improved men, we must have improved means of educating children. By using the appropriate means, it is perfectly practicable to have a community, whose main body shall march forward in the line of industry, prosperity and

uprightness, while few stragglers or deserters only shall leave its compact ranks to enlist under the banners of vice; or by discarding the appropriate means it is perfectly easy to reverse this condition, so that the main body of society shall be the abandoned, the sensual, the profligate, with only here and there a heroic exception, fleeing apostate ranks." (Mann, 1837)

Mann believed the minds and hearts of children were fertile ground in which would grow the crops of whatever seeds were planted there, and he was absolutely convinced that, if children were given proper moral and religious education, they would grow into the citizens needed to maintain and develop the democracy of the great American states.

It is evident from these words that Mann believed the great value of moral and religious training would primarily be social improvement, for both the individual and the community. He promised not only harmony, but also prosperity in the Commonwealth and, ultimately, the entire nation. In this same section of the *Journal*, he clarified his ideas on religious instruction by describing how it would be possible to publish religious truth for general circulation:

The diversity of religious doctrines, prevalent in our community, would render it

difficult to inculcate any religious truths, through the pages of a periodical . . . were it not for two reasons: *first*, that the points on which different portions of a Christian community differ among themselves are far less numerous than those on which they agree; and, *secondly*, were it not also true, that a belief in those points in which they all agree, constitutes the best possible preparation for each to proceed in adding those distinctive particulars, deemed necessary to a complete and perfect faith. A work, devoted to education, which did not recognise [*sic*] the truth that we were created to be religious beings, would be as though we were to form a human body forgetting to put in a heart.” (Mann, 1837).

Mann’s understanding of religious and moral education was further supported by the terms of the Law of 1826, which prohibited the use of schoolbooks in which the tenets of the various Christian sects would be promulgated. The actual section of the law in relation to the use of textbooks reads, “*Provided also*, that said committee [a school committee] shall never direct any school books to be purchased or used, in any of the schools under their superintendence, which are calculated to favour any particular religious sect or tenet” (Mann, 1837). Mann pointed out the requirements of the law already in his *First Annual Report* in the section regarding the duties of each town committee. Later in the same report, he confronted the issue of moral instruction and potential attempts for religious proselytism, a situation that he considered an “alarming phenomenon.” He went on to say, “The consequence of the enactment, however, has been, that among the vast libraries of books, expository of the doctrines of revealed religion, none have been found, free from that advocacy of particular ‘tenets’ or ‘sects’ which includes them within the scope of the legal prohibition; or, at least, no such books have been approved by committees, and introduced into the schools” (Mann, 1837).

At this point Mann introduced the term “natural theology” which he used to describe the elements of Christianity that would be acceptable to most sects. He believed that the general elements of Protestant theology were naturally observable in the world and that these elements were essential to the moral education of children. He went on to describe the horrors of seeing students who were startled by a mispronounced word but who were unmoved by displays of profanity.

The above descriptions are but a sample of Mann’s writings on the importance of religious instruction in the common schools, but they do serve as a notice of his position. It is significant that he made these statements so early in his tenure because questions were raised almost immediately regarding the religious issue. Mann was very sensitive with regard to the issue of sectarianism in the teachings of the schools. This concern was based on several reasons. First of all, he clearly supported the Law

of 1826 and its reaffirmation a decade later. Second, he was aware of the conflict between the religious bodies of his day, especially of the conflict between the Orthodox and the Unitarian churches. Third, he was significantly annoyed by some of the Orthodox preachers and laymen, and what he believed were their overt attempts to insist on having the schools reflect their religious beliefs. It should be noted that Messerli (1972) has documented the support from the various religious groups for both the essence of the law and Mann's explanation of its meaning for the common schools. Those who raised religious concerns were relatively few in comparison with those who were "Friends of Education." Mann and the Board of Education were attacked on religious grounds, however, and it is his response to one of those attacks that is of interest in the present study.

The Conflict Between Mann and the Rev. Matthew Hale Smith

In 1846, a conflict began between Mann and the Reverend Matthew Hale Smith, an Orthodox (Congregationalist) pastor in Boston. By this time, Mann had produced quite a number of reports, issues of *The Common School Journal*, speeches, and articles on the role of religion in the common schools. He had also gained extensive experience in dealing with the public, both those who supported him and those who opposed him. During the entire period, however, there had been an undercurrent of disagreement that surfaced in yet another form in a newspaper article on a sermon preached by the Rev. Matthew Hale Smith. Mann read the article and chose to contact Smith to determine whether the article in the *Boston Recorder* accurately stated the contents of Smith's sermon. That letter began a brief exchange between the two men,¹ but this time Mann had the wisdom of experience behind him when he approached Smith.

The occasion for Mann's first letter to Smith was the appearance of an article in the *Boston Recorder* on 18 October 1846, purporting to represent a sermon Smith had recently preached. Mann phrased his inquiry quite delicately in comparison to an exchange with an earlier adversary. "I have just seen a copy of the *Boston Recorder* of the 18th inst. what purports to be a report of a sermon twice delivered by you in this city. As the Massachusetts Board of Education, as well as myself personally, are

¹ The quotations contained in the ensuing paragraphs are taken from Mann's initial letter to Smith dated 19 October 1846 and Smith's reply dated 27 October 1846. Both documents are listed under "References" at the end of the article.

inculcated by that report, I trust you will not think the inquiry obtrusive; whether that part of it which comes under the 3rd division, & is entitled 'Cause of juvenile depravity,' is a correct representation of what you said." This appears to be a gentle attempt to broach the subject of what Smith had said in his sermon, but the next paragraph indicates that Mann was still very frank in confronting what he believed to be unfair criticism of himself or the Board. The section he referred to essentially claimed that the Board of Education was working to remove the Bible and all religious instruction from the common schools. Mann went on to explain to Smith that anyone aware of what was going on could not possibly accept what Smith was reported to have said in his sermon. "I shall be slow to believe that you ever made that charge, for it is known to every person who has had the honesty to ascertain the facts on the subject, to be wholly untrue." By inserting the words, "honesty to ascertain the facts on the subject," Mann questioned simultaneously Smith's honesty and his awareness.

Mann showed little sensitivity to his alleged opponent and moved ahead as if his inquiry was a hollow introduction to the challenge he wished to pose. He gave evidence of his desire to engage on the subject in a point blank manner after an intervening sentence. "I could hardly believe that anyone would venture upon this grave charge, without having read the reports of the Board; & yet it is much harder to believe that any one would dare to make it who had read them." Here Mann cloaked his refutation in a statement of disbelief that the well informed would ever have reached Smith's conclusion. Making it plain that he already believed that Smith had indeed leveled the charges as reported, Mann referred to a report made two years earlier on the position of the Board relative to the role of the Bible in the common schools. He followed this with his own version of the report on the fact that the Bible was being used in virtually all of the schools of all of the towns. Having supported his position with data from the report, Mann moved on to the next point in Smith's charges, namely, that the Board was working to abolish the use of the "rod" as a means of maintaining discipline in the schools.

Mann claimed that the Board had never done anything to "abolish the use of the rod" in schools or to replace it with nothing more than "a little talk." "On the contrary," he hastened to add, "it has always upheld & defended the use of the rod, when other measures of restraint, had been tried & failed. They go cordially &, as I believe, unanimously, against those enormous abuses of the rod which have been perpetrated by incompetence & bad passions."

Next, Mann wrote as though he were confused by Smith's claim that the common schools were a "counterpoise to religious instruction," and claimed that he would not

“impute to it a bad purpose” until he knew for certain what Smith intended to imply by its use. Once again, this was not a simple inquiry, but a judgment of what Smith was alleged to have said in his sermon. Then, in the next paragraph, Mann took up alleged attacks upon himself and asked Smith to produce proofs of the “crude & destructive principles” he was to have “disseminated thro’ [*sic*] the land.” He also asked for the names of the library books the Board was to have accepted that would inculcate the “deadly heresy” of “universal salvation.”

Having called Smith’s attention to several areas of concern, Mann sought to assure him that he wished “to do it in a candid & courteous manner. Your character, not for common intelligence merely, but for truth, stands implicated by the statements made in the Recorder; & it is due to the Board of Education, to myself, & to yourself, that the charges there made should be either substantiated or withdrawn.” His last achievement in this letter was to challenge not only the truth of what Smith said, but also his intelligence and

character. Even though kindly worded and couched as counsel to the minister, the words were still accusations against Smith. Mann had gained quite a reputation as a person who had the ability and the motivation to engage his opponents in a battle of words to the extent that some would shrink from further involvement.

Mann had gained quite a reputation as a person who had the ability and the motivation to engage his opponents in a battle of words to the extent that some would shrink from further involvement.

When Smith replied, his letter virtually evaded all of Mann’s requests for substantiation and sparred with him on details. Smith did acknowledge that the report in the *Recorder* was correct but then completely ignored Mann’s requests for proof. He did go on in his opening paragraph to state that he believed the Board attempted to do all that Mann had said was being done, but at the same time the Board aided “indirectly, and even unconsciously, in all I have said.” He stated further that, “I was careful to specify the exact things in which in my opinion its influence was not directed to the best will.” Key words here are, “which in my opinion.” Smith believed that he could hold this opinion about an alleged result, without impeaching the motives and religious character of the Board, and maintained that, as the Board was a public entity, it was open to scrutiny and criticism. His justification for suspicion and

rebuke, he claimed, was further supported by the fact that the Board did not have the “approbation” of the entire community. Thus, he had not provided proof of his opinion, but attempted to justify his right not only to hold the opinion but also to state it publicly.

Smith went on to classify Mann as a “public” person and, therefore, open to the same kind of scrutiny and criticism that he had applied to the Board. He claimed familiarity with Mann’s role in making laws in the Legislature, with his *Journal* (*The Common School Journal*), and with his reports and lectures: “I regard you as the representative of a system, & its head, which seeks to change slowly perhaps, but surely, the whole system of Education in common schools; the results of which will be to elevate the intellectual above the moral, & man above God. In detail and element I conceive your notions to be crude; their fruits destructive, & the more I have seen . . . the worse to my mind it appears.” Obviously, these words would do little to erase the mistrust which Mann already held for Smith, and Mann would very likely rise to the challenge Smith presented when he attacked the objective and results of Mann’s efforts. Still lacking, however, is anything more than Smith’s opinion. At this point, however, Smith turned to a manipulation of words to divert attention from what was obviously opinion and emotional argument. With regard to his earlier accusation that the Board was a “counterpoise” to religious instruction, Smith now allowed that his words had a deeper meaning than Mann had understood. “I understand you to be opposed to the use of the Bible in the schools, as a school Book. I mean the *whole* Bible. The Law—the Prophets—the Psalms—the New Testament. I suppose you to be willing that parts shall be read—But are you in favor of the *whole* Bible as a school Book?” Smith’s question here presented two problems. The first was that he changed his accusation to a question and never provided proof to substantiate the original accusation. The second was that he now construed his point to mean the Bible in its entirety, as if Mann or the Board had deliberately chosen to ignore or eliminate certain elements that would support the Orthodox position.

In another point addressed by Mann, Smith had accused the Board of attempting to abolish corporal punishment in the common schools. Rather than substantiate his charge, Smith turned the question back to Mann. “Are you in favor of the use of the rod as a *principle* [*sic*] means of enforcing obedience? That you tolerate it in deference to public sentiment I do not dispute — But I am misinformed if you are not against its use, & do not, as you have opportunity, discontinuance it.” Mann was soon to have another opportunity to attack Smith on this point, primarily because of the error Smith made in the use of the word, “principle.” However, Smith had equivocated his charge at this juncture, showing that he really had no substance

behind his attack.

Having questioned the use of corporal punishment, Smith turned back to the charge he had made relative to religious instruction:

I understand you to be opposed to religious instruction in schools—that you rule out as far [as] you have power, truths & sanctions which nine tenths of professing Christians believe to be essential to sound morals & an honest life, no less than to the salvation of the soul. If you are in favor of religious instruction in schools, will you please state what you mean by that term, & what you recommend to be taught.

This question came from a person who had, in a sermon, accused Mann and the Board of being against religious instruction. His question now appeared to be the kind that might have been asked prior to preaching the sermon in which he made the accusation, for there was no support for his claim that Mann's position was contrary to that held by ninety percent of Christianity. This tactic, however, was apparently intended to divert Mann away from Smith's error and to a defense of himself and the Board. This tactic must have been frustrating for Mann since his accuser would not engage on the basis of evidence, but continued to attack Mann and the Board with the same opinions he originally posed in his sermon. The extent to which Mann had influenced, by his direct attack, the approach that Smith would take is left to speculation. Mann had certainly placed Smith on the defensive with his questions and rebuttal, but there was no evidence of fear or discomfort in the reply he received from Smith. In a subsequent sentence, Smith demanded that Mann define the term "religious instruction," a tactic which would allow him to pick Mann's position apart at will if the Secretary failed to state a definition that corresponded exactly with his own.

Smith then turned to an assumption about Mann's position as Secretary of the Board of Education, which suggested an underlying fear. "I regard the position & the authority with which you are clothed as giving you great power to work disaster & ruin to many who come under your influence. Those who clothe you with power aid in the work you do. You may suppose that in all this work you are serving well your country. I may entertain a different opinion." Here was an attack on Mann and the Board that could not be refuted—it was simply Smith's opinion that Mann did not serve well and that the Board was guilty for having bestowed certain unnamed powers on Mann. In fact, neither the Board nor Mann had any specific authority, except to collect information. Smith construed their ability to influence the future of education as their great power, but was incorrect in calling it a bestowed power. Mann never, however, pursued the technical difficulty with this particular point made

by Smith. Instead, he challenged the contention that he and the Board did not work for the good of the common schools.

The stage was now set on which to define the nature of the relationship that could be anticipated between the two people. Mann had charged ahead with his inquiry in a way that showed he already considered Smith guilty of making his charges without data to support them. He had also written his letter in a way that at least implied that Smith was uninformed, opinionated, and dangerous. Mann had been quick to criticize and slow to employ the persuasive techniques he promised himself that he would use to win over those who disagreed with him. His pattern, based on both early and later examples during his career, did not seem to change. It appeared that the

martyrdom he claimed he was to suffer would be, to some extent, self-imposed or self-generated. It did not seem to occur to him that he might have been worthy of some of the criticisms he received just because he lacked diplomacy in the way he approached those whose ideas differed from his own. Of course, he had a particular bias against the Orthodox formulated on the basis of his childhood

experiences and later adult experiences, but he never seemed to differentiate between individuals who fell into disfavor with him and the balance of individuals in their class.

Mann took Smith to task in his next letter to which Smith did not reply. Instead, Smith chose to publish a pamphlet to carry the conflict to a public venue. The conflict eventually died from lack of interest or significance.

Mann had been quick to criticize and slow to employ the persuasive techniques he promised himself that he would use to win over those who disagreed with him. It appeared that the martyrdom he claimed he was to suffer would be, to some extent, self-imposed or self-generated.

Conclusion

This short treatment of Mann's exchanges with Smith may typify some of the conflicts, which occur between leaders and members of the community. Readers may

learn different lessons from the historical record and choose their responses accordingly, deciding which conflicts or individuals to avoid and which are worth pursuit.

References

- Mann, H. (Ed.). (1837). *The Common School Journal, Vol. 1*. Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon, & Webb. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
- Mann, H. (1846). Letter to M. H. Smith, 19 October 1846. Horace Mann Papers. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
- Messerli, J. (1972). *Horace Mann: A biography*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Smith, M. H. (1846). Letter to H. Mann, 27 October 1846. Horace Mann Papers. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
-

50 Years Ago in *Lutheran Education*: John Dewey and Lutheran Schools

“[T]he credo of Dewey became: ‘School is not preparation for life, but school is life.’ . . . Previously teachers had taught citizenship as though it were a subject. Rules were issued, many pious and patriotic platitudes were committed to memory, and recitations regurgitated this valuable information. Less thought was given to changing behavior, instilling favorable attitudes, or understanding the real significance of good citizenship.

. . . The applicability of this principle of living the life of a Christian now rather than at some future time is a necessary step in the development of real Christians in our Lutheran schools. . . . The Lutheran teacher who explains Christian experiences to his pupils should not sit back and expect perfection. [However,] the Lutheran teacher must apply this concept, that a Christian life must be lived now. The result will be rewarding, and it is worth the effort to initiate it.”

E. L. Schapsmeier, “John Dewey’s Acceptable Contributions,”
Lutheran Education, Dec. 1952

Adiaphora and Organizational Vitality: Stimulating Innovations and Preserving Core Teachings

Dr. Roger Finke is Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies at Penn State University and Director of the American Religion Data Archive. He has also taught at Purdue, Loyola of Chicago, and Concordia, River Forest. His book Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion (co-authored with Rodney Stark), received the 2001 Distinguished Book Award from the American Sociological Association's section on the Sociology of Religion.

Throughout American history the marginal minority faiths of one era have become the prominent religions of the next. From the sects immigrating to America, (e.g., the Puritans, Baptists, and Methodists) to those born on American soil (e.g., the Disciples, Assemblies of God, and Jehovah's Witnesses), the upstarts have charted the most dramatic growth throughout American history. Unlike their mainline counterparts, the upstarts have made strong demands of their members and have claimed a return to the teachings and traditions of their past. They claim that their vitality is explained by their willingness to retain the high demands of traditional teachings. Much research would support these claims.

Yet, it is equally clear that the vast majority of sectarian groups show little potential for growth. Of the scores of sects spawned by the Baptists and Pentecostals (and Lutherans) only a handful have been able to support sustained growth. Most sect

movements remain small and obscure. Retaining traditions and making high demands on members is not sufficient to explain the sustained vitality of religious organizations.

So, when does clinging to past teachings and traditions increase organizational vitality, and when does it curtail vitality? I will argue that denominations sustaining organizational vitality

must find avenues for developing and adapting innovations (e.g., new developments in ministry, mission, fellowship, education, worship, and many other areas). Yet, as the religious organizations are promoting innovative adaptations, they must also preserve the core teachings, values, and traditions that justify their very existence and serve as the foundation for these innovations. In short, my thesis is:

Denominations sustaining organizational vitality must find avenues for developing and adapting innovations. Yet, as the religious organizations are promoting innovative adaptations, they must also preserve the core teachings, values, and traditions that justify their very existence and serve as the foundation for these innovations.

Religious groups sustain organization vitality by preserving core religious teachings and practices, as they introduce organizational innovations for serving members and adapting to their changing environment.¹

I argue that religious organizations are faced with two seemingly contradictory goals:

1) Guarding core religious beliefs and principles that are held as timeless. 2) Generating innovations for local churches adapting to a changing world. On the one hand, they must be the defenders of the one true faith; on the other they must respond to an ever-changing environment. To borrow from Lutheran theologians, they must distinguish between Biblical commands (i.e., core teachings not open to change) and adiaphora (i.e., actions that are neither commanded or forbidden by Biblical teachings). This thesis recognizes that some forms of accommodation are

¹ Organizational vitality refers to the organization's ability to attract and retain members, and to generate commitment from these members.

beneficial, while others are not.

I will begin by introducing major trends in denominational growth and decline in America, then I will explain why preserving core teachings is essential for the vitality of growing denominations, and how organizational structure and leadership help to explain a denomination's ability to generate and incorporate new innovations that build on these core teachings. Finally, I will illustrate these arguments with an historical example and briefly discuss the implications for the LCMS.

Historical Trends in Church Growth

If there is one urgent lesson I have learned from my historical studies of American religion it is this: anyone who plans to write about religious change in America should first consult *Ecclesiastes* 1:9: "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." Unfortunately for the social sciences and history, verse 11 points out that there is "no remembrance of men of old."

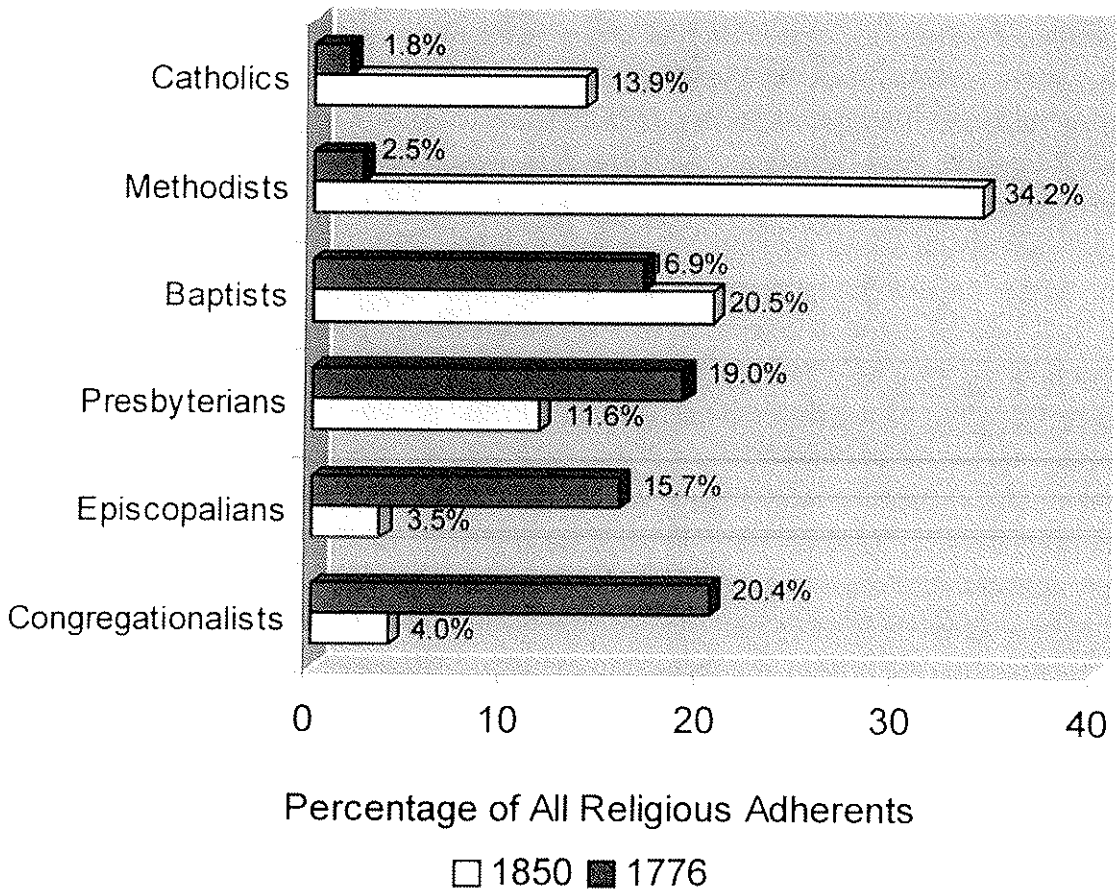
The recent trend of upstart sectarian groups growing and the staid mainline denominations falling into decline is nothing new. Of all Americans active in a religious denomination in 1776, over one half (55 percent) belonged to one of the three major colonial religions: Congregationalist, Episcopalian, or Presbyterian. By 1850 the percentage plummeted to 19 percent (see Figure 1). Meanwhile, the upstart sects of the early nineteenth century, the Methodists and Baptists, grew at a torrid pace, with the Methodists skyrocketing from 2.5 percent to 34.2 percent of all church adherents.

Realize the Methodists of the nineteenth century were very different from the Methodists we know today. Like the early Baptists, they placed strict demands on membership and they emphasized emotional conversion experiences (e.g., spiritual experiences at camp meetings included the jerks, dancing, barking, and laughing). And, the weekly class meeting of the Methodists, which typically included 8-10 members, challenged members on matters of faith and conduct, enforcing high standards for membership.

Also, the growth of the Catholics was not inevitable, despite the heavy flow of immigrants from predominantly Catholic nations. In truth, most of the millions of immigrants from "Catholic" nations were at best *potential* American Catholic parishioners. The techniques Catholics used to recruit the immigrants were remarkably similar to those of their Protestant counterparts. At the center of this new evangelical surge was the Catholic revival campaign they called the parish mission. Using uniquely Catholic ritual, symbolism, and ceremony, which were consistent with their core teachings, the traveling evangelists would seek to stir the spirit and save

the soul. Like Protestant sectarian movements, they quickly adapted to the new nation with a host of organizational innovations, but the innovations were designed to promote the core teachings and practices of Catholicism (Dolan, 1978).

Figure 1: Religious Adherents by Denomination, 1776 and 1850 (as a percentage of total adherents)



From 1850 to 1926, the rapid growth of Catholicism was the big story, but we can still see some interesting trends for the Protestants (see Table 1). First, the Missouri Synod Lutherans are in their hey day. Although they relied heavily on German immigrants for new members, this growth was not a given. When Friedrich C. D. Wyneken ([1843], 1982) published his essay “The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America” in a distinguished German newspaper, he referred to the Methodists and other sects as “dangerous enemies” with rapidly growing missions to the Germans. He explained that “unless the Lord sends help very soon, [the sects] will certainly even wipe out the name of the Lutheran church in the West.” Using innovative evangelical techniques, traditional Lutheran teachings, and a strong German subculture, the German-American Lutherans responded with a passion that rivaled the American sects.

Second, the religious groups that viewed themselves as most distinctive from the dominant culture and other religious groups were the most likely to grow in the early twentieth century, too, with the Missouri Synod being the most distinctive of them all (see Table 1). Based on a survey of 16,355 church members conducted in 1932 by sociologist H. Paul Douglass (1934), the denominations in which members were the least likely to support church unity and perceived the greatest differences between themselves and others were the most likely to grow. Notice that the Methodists are no longer the distinctive sect they once were, and now their growth has also declined.

These same trends continued throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, but now we have new upstarts: Pentecostals, Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses (see Table 2). Along with the upstarts’ growth and the continued slide of the mainline, we see the initial stages of decline for the LCMS and the Southern Baptists. I should also mention what Figure 1 and Tables 1 and 2 do not show. Although conservative sects are showing the most rapid growth, many conservative sectarian groups hit their high water mark the day they split from their denominations. Over the last two centuries literally hundreds of conservative sects have split from their denominations in protest and faded into oblivion. This raises the obvious question: how does the LCMS, and other religious groups of today, avoid repeating the history of the once prominent colonial mainline denominations and the many obscure conservative sects?² A part of the answer is preserving core religious teachings.

² For a more complete discussion and review of the historical trends of church growth, see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark (1992), *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy*.

Table 1: Denominational Growth and Rejection of Church Unity, 1932#

Protestant Denominations	Net Growth 1916-1926	% Rejecting Unity
Missouri Lutherans	51.1	89.2
Lutherans*	45.7	60.0
United Lutherans	43.9	51.4
Southern Baptists**	15.0	58.4
Presbyterian, U.S.	11.0	52.9
Episcopalians	3.8	40.2
Southern Methodists	2.6	40.3
Presbyterian, U.S.A.	1.4	20.9
Disciples	-2.7	24.7
Methodists	-5.3	23.1
Congregationalists	-6.1	21.1
United Brethren	-6.9	27.9
Reformed, America	-9.0	36.0
Reformed, U.S.	-10.2	14.7
Northern Baptists	-11.5	44.9
Methodists, Protestant	-12.3	34.2
Friends	-16.2	43.2
Evangelical Synod	-22.6	10.1

* All Lutherans except Missouri and United Lutherans

** The American Baptist Association was included in Southern Baptist totals for 1916, but not 1926. With the ABA included in the 1926 totals, the net growth for Southern Baptists was 19.4.

The data on "Perceived Differences" and rejecting mergers were taken from a questionnaire study of 16,355 church members conducted in 1932 (Douglass and Brunner, 1935). Measures on social distance were asked for each denomination and included willingness to marry a member of that faith, being buried according to their rites, sending a child to their Sunday schools, receiving communion from a minister of these faiths, and so on. The measure for rejecting mergers was:

If you had to decide now what religious people of the United States should do about church union, would you

- (1.) *Continue essentially the present system of separate denominations?*
- (2.) *Unite the various church bodies into one church?*
- (3.) *Adopt some form of permanent and binding federal union of denominations, after the analogy of the state and federal government in the United States.*

Preserving Core Teachings

When James Collins and Jerry Porras (1994) studied commercial companies that were highly admired and had achieved sustained success over multiple generations, they found that a fundamental element of these companies was an allegiance to a “core ideology.” The core values of this ideology were enduring and essential tenets that went beyond just making money. And, though this small set of core values provided general guidelines for the company, they offered few specific goals or strategies. Unlike corporate goals and strategies, these core values remained “relatively fixed for long periods of time” (p. 48).

For religious organizations, the core ideology is even more fundamental. The core teachings are embedded in a unique history, make specific claims to truth about an all-powerful God, and are often closely tied to distinctive religious rituals. These core teachings refer to beliefs and practices that are considered the essential teachings of the religious movement and are typically supported by sacred texts, divine revelations, and writings from the most respected historical leaders of the movement. Even the non-creedal sects, such as the Assemblies of God, the Southern Baptists, and the Old Order Amish offer statements of faith for their religious body. Recent work has identified several reasons why sustaining core teachings contributes to the long term vitality of religious organizations.

First, *perhaps the most essential element of core teachings is that they provide the expectations and promises for interaction with God.* From the miracles and religious experiences promised in the here and now to the rewards in the life hereafter, core teachings lay out the expectations of religious faith. Does Christ offer the only plan for salvation or are there many equally effective plans? Is Jesus an all powerful and all knowing God or simply a good teacher? Along with offering specific teachings about the supernatural, core teachings also offer ways of knowing God through specific rituals, sacraments, or religious experiences

Second, *core teachings are essential for defining the religious group's boundaries with the surrounding culture.* The core teachings justify the distinctive subculture of the religious group and the demands placed on members.³ This distinctive subculture results in social groups and fellowship opportunities that are unique to the religious group. To the extent that these groups strengthen the social networks of the group, they increase the commitment of the members and they produce the resources needed for an active church. Virtually all local churches rely

³ For early Missouri Synod Lutherans, German ancestry also offered a clear boundary for the subculture.

Table 2: Church Adherence Rates for Major Denominations, 1950 to 1999 (Adherents Per 1000 Population).

	1950	1975	1999
Mainline Protestant Denominations			
The United Methodist Church	64	46	31
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	26	25	19
Presbyterian Church (USA)	21	16	13
Episcopal Church	17 (1949)	13	9
United Church of Christ	13 (1949)	8	5
Evangelical Protestant Denominations			
Southern Baptist Convention	47	59	58
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod	11	13	10
Assemblies of God	2	6	9
Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc.	.3	2 (1989)	6 (1998)
Other			
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	7	11	19
Jehovah's Witnesses	1 (1955)	3	7
<hr/>			
The Catholic Church (Roman Catholic)	189	227	229
Judaism	33	28	24 (1990)

Sources: All information is from the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, except for the most recent Jewish estimate.

Notes: 1) Reported rates are rates of church adherence per 1000 members of the population, rather than the percentage of church adherents reported elsewhere. Because the total number of adherents was unknown for most years, the percentage of total church adherents could not be calculated. 2) All estimates before 1999 adjust for mergers and splits among denominations by including all denominations that comprise the denomination in question in 1999.

on their members' resources of time and money to generate a staff for educational programs, participate in an active worship life, plan social events, and pay the bills.

Third, *distinctive core teachings and practices retain members*. When religious groups hold unique histories, offer distinctive worship, or lay sole claim to a source of religious authority (e.g., a prophet, institutions), they offer something that others don't provide. For example, conservative Catholic movements seeking to restore previous traditions, are compelled by their very belief structure to remain within the church. Splitting from the formal structure of the Roman Catholic Church would mean abandoning the "one true church" that carries nearly two millennia of church tradition and is the source for Apostolic Succession. When groups hold inimitable core teachings valued by their members, switching to an alternative religion is less attractive.

Finally, *if the core teachings are going to secure sustained vitality for the religious organization, they must appeal to a stable segment of the market*. If we place religious demand on a continuum, with one end focusing on the supernatural to the fullest extent possible (i.e., communes and religious orders) and the other end accepting only a remote and inactive conception of the supernatural, few will seek either extreme (see Figure 2). Instead, the demand for religion will rise as we move away from each extreme, reaching a peak as we fall midway between the two ends of the continuum. Hence, groups that generate high rates of growth, independent of exceptionally high fertility, are those that fall midway between the far ends of the continuum. To the extent that core teachings appeal to a sizeable segment of the market, shifts in teachings threaten the vitality of the organization.

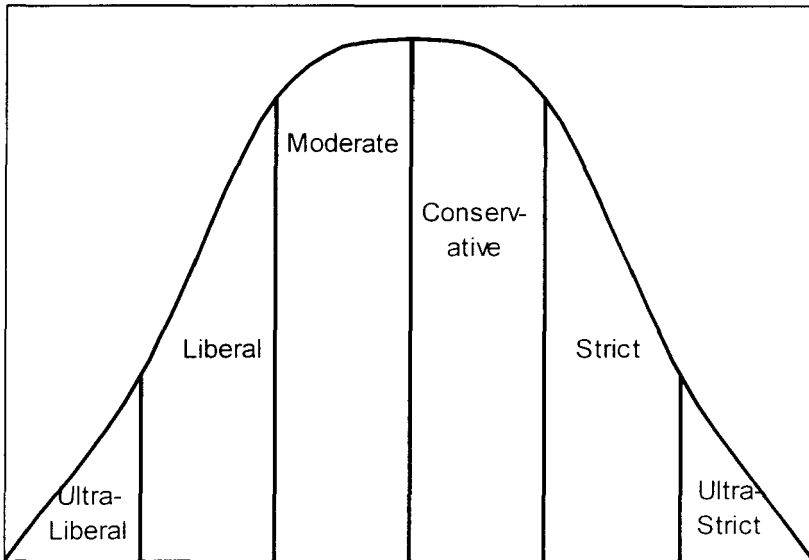
Hence, when religious organizations revise core teachings, they threaten organizational vitality in many ways. First, the expectations and promises for a relationship with God are threatened. Second, they can erode member commitment by breaking down the boundaries for membership. Third, changes can rob members of distinctive religious beliefs and rituals, reducing the costs of members switching to a new religion. Fourth, these changes can place the organization in a smaller segment of the religious market.⁴

Striving for Innovations

Despite the importance of sustaining core teachings, however, this alone does

⁴ For a more complete discussion see Rodney Stark and Roger Finke (2000), *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*.

Figure 2
A Hypothetical Distribution of Religious Niches



Very Low

← Degree of Tension →

Very High

not secure organizational vitality. Religious organizations must continually adapt to their changing environment. Although the innovations and core teachings might sometimes be in conflict—one emphasizing adaptation and the other constancy—the most successful innovations are those that build on core teachings. Indeed, religious leaders will often cite the core teachings as serving as the source of inspiration for new innovations.

The failure of many religious organizations is not that they fail to support core teachings, but rather that they treat all aspects of the organization as core ideology.

This is most evident in the sects that hit their high-water mark on the day they began. Founded on the principle of restoring or retaining past traditions, they tenaciously hold to all traditions, refusing to accommodate to changes in the environment. Not only do they resist adaptations that might threaten their core teachings, they resist all forms of organizational change. Often holding tight social networks, which close them off from other religions and the secular culture, they are able to prevent all forms of adaptations. In their efforts to prevent heresy, they curb all innovations.

But backwater sects are not the only groups that curb innovations; the very structure of the largest religious organizations often prevents effective adaptations. There are several reasons why churches would choose to resist innovation.

Organizational Roadblocks to Innovation

For many religious organizations, especially the long established mainline denominations, efforts to

mimic and conform to peer institutions becomes a roadblock for

developing innovations.

Organizations' efforts to conform to the norms, traditions, and social influences of peer institutions and

professionals results in a

homogeneity or isomorphism among the organizations. For religious organizations, this isomorphism has the potential for a worst case scenario: *revising core teachings as it curbs innovations.* Because other religious professionals and organizations may or may not share the religious organization's core ideologies, conforming to the larger networks will tend to reduce their unique and distinctive religious teachings. This trend of isomorphism has been evident in the so-called mainline religions for over two centuries. They have conformed their core teachings to a standard acceptable to all, gradually losing the most distinctive and exclusive teachings as they refuse to introduce organizational changes that are too innovative. This same conformity can curb innovations that stray too far from existing strategies and practices.

A second factor that curbs organizational innovation, and is closely related to isomorphism, is the internal regulations of the religious organization. *As the administrative sector of a denomination expands, authority will become more*

The failure of many religious organizations is not that they fail to support core teachings, but rather that they treat all aspects of the organization as core ideology.

centralized and policies will be standardized. Here I am referring to regulations that go far beyond the specific core teachings of the organization. For example, how and when new churches can be started is often heavily regulated by the larger organization. Mainline churches, including the LCMS, will typically provide financial support for churches that receive approval from the local district, presbytery, diocese, or conference.⁵ Yet this approval relies on congregations meeting a wide range of criteria, typically including: support of surrounding congregations, increasing need due to population growth, the leadership of an ordained pastor, grassroots support, and a financial plan for support after the subsidy has ended. If churches shun the financial support and begin without the approval of surrounding congregations, they can still be denied admission into the denomination. As shown in Table 3, there is extreme variation in the rate of starting new churches. Denominations that rely entirely on lay clergy for starting new churches, and place few restrictions on how they are started, have far higher rates. Because new churches are an important source of organizational innovation and growth, deterring new church starts will stifle denominational innovation and growth.

But these internal regulations are not always formal regulations imposed by a central office; they are often informal expectations imposed by fellow clergy. This leads to a third factor. *To the extent that the denomination relies on professional clergy, clergy will be more restrained by the norms of the profession and the larger organization.* This restraint is not limited to clergy; research finds that the greater the extent of professionalization in a field, the more the professionals are restrained by the norms of the profession. Standardized professional training and expectations, combined with professional networks supporting the existing organizational culture, serve to block many forms of organizational change. Like other professionals, clergy are swayed by the expectations of their peers and mentors.

Sources of Innovation

If all the factors just mentioned are curbing innovations, how do religious organizations generate new innovations? Several sources of innovation fall outside the formal structure of the denomination. *Many innovations are generated by religious groups outside the mainstream of denominational activity.* Sectarian

⁵ This varies from one denomination to the next, but the most typical plan is 100 percent support for the first year, 80 percent for second, and so on, until they are receiving no support at the end of five years.

Table 3: Annual Formation of New Churches, United States, 1995

	Number of New Churches Formed per Year*	New Churches Formed per 1,000 Existing Churches
United Methodist Church	35	1.0
United Presbyterian Church (USA)	30	2.6
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	50	4.5
Episcopal Church	38	5.1
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod	44	7.1
Southern Baptist Convention**	484	12.1
Jehovah's Witness	208	20.2
Assemblies of God	271	23.0
Mormon Latter-day Saints	254	24.9
Vineyard Christian Fellowship	34	109.8

* The United Methodists report is based on one year, the Vineyard is based on two years, and the number of Episcopalian new starts was "estimated" by the denominational official in charge of starting new churches. All other statistics report on an annual average for three years, 1993-95.

**Based on "church starts" statistics.

Sources: For each denomination, I interviewed the official in charge of starting new churches. They provided the data on the number of new churches started per year and information on the procedures followed.

Adiaphora and Organizational Vitality

groups and other renewal movements are a source of many innovations. Just as the Catholic counter-reformation borrowed innovations from Lutheran and other schismatic movements, mainstream churches continue to borrow from the Vineyard Fellowship and other innovative religious movements today. Because sectarian movements seldom hold a large administrative sector and they often rely on lay rather than professional clergy, they are frequently the source of new religious innovations.

A second source of external innovation is from the abundance of organizations and loosely organized movements that share some core Christian teachings with many Protestant denominations, but lack formal denominational ties. Historically, the Sunday School Movement, the American Tract Society, and the preaching of revivalists, such as George Whitefield, have brought a host of innovations to local churches. More recently, the contemporary para-church organizations of Promise Keepers and the Willow Creek Association have introduced local churches to new styles of worship and have given renewed attention to the importance of small group fellowships. Independent seminaries and church consultants have also proven to be sources of innovation. For example, the clergy leading the rapidly growing evangelical movements in the United Methodist Church frequently attend evangelical seminaries and borrow from evangelical para-church groups. Although not sponsored or controlled by a single denomination, these movements offer organizational strategies and techniques that are quickly adopted by local churches.

Denominations can also develop *organizational strategies that give selected internal groups more freedom in developing and using innovations.* These groups identify with the core teachings of the larger denomination and are recognized by the denomination, yet they are semi-autonomous from denominational authority.⁶ The most obvious example is Catholic religious orders. Falling outside the formal government structure of the church, and not confined by territorial boundaries, religious orders are free to focus on a particular mission, or “charism.” Religious orders have been a source of innovation in the areas of evangelization, education, individual spirituality, and church reform throughout the history of the Catholic Church. Although they lack the formal structure of religious orders, most Protestant denominations also support groups that share in their beliefs and often carry their name, but are not under the formal authority of the denomination. The Lutheran Bible Translators would be one of many examples.

Finally, starting new churches is perhaps the most common method for

⁶ For a discussion of how religious orders serve as sources of innovation, see Finke and Wittberg, 2000.

developing innovations that build on a set of core teachings. With no local organizational history to restrain action, and often relying on lay clergy, the new churches have more freedom to introduce innovations. For new churches, many of the internal roadblocks for innovation are removed.

Innovative Returns to Traditions

Many religious organizations could be used to illustrate how denominations preserve or revise core teachings, and how they stimulate or deter new innovations, but the Methodists have probably shown more fluctuations than any of the other major religious bodies in America. The rapid ascent of the Methodists in the nineteenth century, rising from less than 2.5 percent of all church adherents in 1776 to more than 34.2 percent in 1850, was followed by a steady decline in the twentieth century. Initially, the Methodists introduced a host of new innovations and provided core teachings that mobilized the masses. But over time the young Methodists began to imitate the mainline denominations, introducing few new innovations and gradually revising their core teachings.

The innovations of the young Methodist sect were truly remarkable. When John Wesley was concerned about the spiritual state of members, he formed small groups called classes (approximately 8-12 members) for monitoring members' faith and conduct. When these classes were combined with the introduction of circuit riding preachers, the Methodists showed an organizational flexibility that was unsurpassed by other religious organizations in the early nineteenth century. The circuit riders could start new classes where only a few could gather, and their itinerant ministries allowed them to support and supervise classes in disparate locations. Wyneken (1843) described them as "swarming pests" that infected nearly every Lutheran and Reformed congregation (p. 32).

Like Martin Luther, the Methodists also introduced music and preaching that was targeted for the masses. John and Charles Wesley stressed that their music use language of the "utmost simplicity and plainness, suited to every capacity," and they took pride in producing hymns that were easy and fun to sing. But they were equally emphatic that their hymns remained true to their teachings and had "no cant expressions, no words without meaning." Likewise early Methodism has been described as a religion that "preached a message to the common man and used the common man to preach it" (Ferguson, 1971, p. 79).

Along with introducing new innovations, the Methodists were also quick to borrow. As the mainline denominations debated the dangers of revival techniques, the early Methodist bishop Francis Asbury was aggressively promoting the use of

revivalistic camp meetings throughout Methodism. Writing in 1811, Asbury boldly describes camp meetings as the “battle ax and weapon of war” (Asbury, 1958: p.453). Methodists also borrowed the latest in printing technologies to promote their message. These efforts began with John Wesley’s commitment to providing cheaper and more accessible books on religion, but it reached a new high in America (Hatch, 1989).

By the mid-nineteenth century, however, many were beginning to express concern over changing beliefs and practices in the Methodist Church (Peters, 1985). Writing in 1855, the famous circuit rider Peter Cartwright (1856) lamented that his Methodists had “almost let camp meetings die out,” the class meetings were now neglected, and the circuit riders were dismounting and replacing the local lay preachers (p. 523). By the late nineteenth century, these tensions fully surfaced. With Methodist theologians criticizing many of the traditional teachings on holiness and Methodist leaders attempting to regulate the activities of holiness evangelists, holiness spokesmen began to call “all true holiness Christians to come out of Methodism’s church of mammon” (Melton, 1989). And out they came, sect after sect.

Recently, however, evangelical Methodist movements such as the Confessing Movement and Good News have been calling for a renewal of their denomination’s “tradition,” and a reclaiming of their distinct doctrinal heritage. The Confessing Movement’s official statements report that they are “not asking for a new definition of faith, but for a new level of integrity in upholding historical doctrinal standards in a thoughtful, serious and principled way.” Along with restoring the core teachings, the movements have been borrowing innovations from other evangelicals, and their congregations are growing. Thus, returning to core teachings and adopting organizational innovations have resulted in a renewed organizational vitality for mainline churches in these movements (Finke and Stark, 2001; McKinney and Finke, 2003).

Adiaphora and the LCMS

How does this relate to the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod of the twenty-first century? Is the LCMS protecting core teachings and traditions and generating innovations for an ever changing world? I don’t claim to have the definitive answers, but I will offer a few reflections.

For the past few decades, the LCMS has been far more effective in preserving core teachings than in stimulating innovations. The denomination remains committed to the Biblical teachings and Lutheran confessions upon which it was founded. Although the unique German subculture has faded, the LCMS continues to offer an

inimitable combination of liturgical worship, a commitment to Biblical inerrancy, Lutheran doctrine, and, when compared to others believing the Bible is inerrant, a high tolerance for members drinking alcoholic beverages. The LCMS has avoided the “worst case scenario” experienced by many mainline denominations (i.e., compromising core teachings and stifling organizational innovations) by preserving core teachings.

When it comes to organizational innovations and adapting to an ever changing world, however, the LCMS has hit numerous roadblocks. When the “conservatives” gained leadership of the LCMS in the 1970s, their initial efforts were targeted at preserving core teachings. This might still be the target, but the fear of heresy has resulted in regulatory actions that go far beyond core teachings.⁷ Some might object that the structure of the denomination, with much of the authority relying in the local congregations, doesn’t allow the synod to regulate actions of the local congregations. As reviewed earlier, however, constraints can also be placed on the professionals leading organizations. When congregations rely on seminary trained clergy, who are closely tied to the denomination, the synod can stifle innovations by monitoring the actions and training of the clergy.

Perhaps the most formidable roadblock is that clergy are restrained by fellow clergy and the larger organization. Even a cursory glance at the recent events of the LCMS provides evidence of clergy monitoring clergy. As clergy increasingly fear charges from their peers, there are few incentives for trying innovative ministries or programs, regardless of their relationship to the core teachings. This increasingly regulatory environment of the local circuits and districts has resulted in an atmosphere where the only safe alternative is to use the routines and strategies of the past. For many clergy, whose livelihood relies on synodical approval, the safe alternative is viewed as the only alternative.

A second roadblock has been the training of all pastors in two closely monitored seminaries. Unlike most large denominations, where clergy hold degrees from a variety of seminaries, LCMS clergy attend two seminaries tightly tied to the synod. The ability to monitor two seminaries has held the important advantage of allowing the synod to effectively promote core LCMS teachings. The disadvantage is that it offers the temptation of regulating seminaries far beyond these core beliefs and

⁷ In similar fashion, when the conservatives of the Southern Baptist Convention gained key leadership positions they sought to ensure that core teachings were preserved. More recently, however, they have been charged with revising core teachings by adding to the “Baptist Faith and Message” and by violating the autonomy of local congregations.

practices, resulting in the unintended consequence of stifling organizational innovations.

Despite these formidable roadblocks for clergy introducing innovations in the local churches, the synod has maintained a host of affiliations with semi-autonomous organizations introducing innovative forms of ministry. In the area of missions, for example, the Association of Lutheran Mission Agencies (ALMA) reports over 50 mission agencies as members. Some are longstanding ministries such as the Lutheran Hour Ministries, the Lutheran Bible Translators, and the many ministries they have spawned. Others are more recent adaptations to new mission opportunities. The International Student Ministry, for example, was formally organized in 1996 to reach out to international students on university campuses across the country. Most, if not all, of the affiliated missions proclaim a belief statement that closely resembles the formal belief statements of the LCMS. Yet, they hold an autonomy from the organizational structure of

the denomination that allows them to respond quickly and creatively to new mission opportunities.

Adiaphora (i.e., actions that are neither commanded nor forbidden by Biblical teachings) has been recognized by Lutheran pastors and

theologians since the sixteenth century; yet as we enter the twenty-first century debates rage on where the boundaries should be placed. The LCMS has successfully preserved the core teachings, but as more and more behaviors and beliefs are included as unchangeable, the opportunities for innovations in ministry are curtailed and the chance of organizational vitality is reduced.

Failure to preserve core teachings results in a religious message with little to say and less to offer. Failure to develop organizational innovations results in a denomination that few will notice and even fewer will hear.

Conclusion

This essay is not the first to suggest that some accommodation is beneficial, while other accommodation is not. When the Formula of Concord laid out the “correct and true doctrine” of adiaphora in 1577, two important principles emerged: 1) the “truth of the Gospel” should never be compromised; 2) “the congregation of God of every place and every time has the power, according to its circumstances, to

change such ceremonies in such manner as may be most useful and edifying to the congregation of God.” A couple centuries later, John Wesley reportedly quipped: “in essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things charity” (as quoted in McKinney, 2001). Both religious groups would probably refer to the apostle Paul as their source for this insight.

Here I have tried to explain how sustaining core teachings and promoting innovations outside the core contribute to organizational vitality. The organizational challenge for all denominations is allowing pastors and congregations the freedom to develop innovative ministries without opening the door for heretical teachings that challenge the core. Failure to preserve core teachings results in a religious message with little to say and less to offer. Failure to develop organizational innovations results in a denomination that few will notice and even fewer will hear.†

References

- Asbury, F. (1958). *The letters of Francis Asbury*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
Original work published in 1852.
- Book of concord: The symbols of the evangelical Lutheran church*. (1952). (T. G. Tappert, Ed. and Trans.). St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.
- Cartwright, P. (1856). *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the backwoods preacher*. W.P. Strickland (Ed.). NY: Carlton and Porter.
- Collins, J. C. & Porras, J. I. (1994). *Built to last*. NY: HarperBusiness.
- Dolan, J. P. (1978). *Catholic revivalism: The American experience, 1830-1900*. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P.
- Douglass, H. P. (1934). *Church unity movements in the United States*. NY: Institute of Social and Religious Research.
- Douglass, H. P. & Brunner, E. de S. (1935). *The protestant church as a social institution*. NY: Russell & Russell.
- Ferguson, C. W. (1971). *Organizing to beat the devil: Methodists and the making of America*. NY: Doubleday.
- Finke, R. & Stark, R. (1992). *The churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and losers in our religious economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP.
- Finke, R. & Stark, R. (2001). The new holy clubs: Testing church-to-sect propositions. *Sociology of Religion*, 62, 175-189.
- Finke R. & Wittberg, P. (2000). Organizational revival from within: Explaining revivalism and reform in the Roman Catholic church. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39, 154-170.
- Hatch, N. O. (1989). *The democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven:

Adiaphora and Organizational Vitality

Yale UP.

- McKinney, J. (2001). *Clergy connections: The impact of clergy networks on evangelical renewal movements*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- McKinney, J. & Finke, R. (2002). Reviving the mainline: An overview of clergy support for evangelical movements. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 41, 773-785.
- Melton, J. G. (1989). *The encyclopedia of American religions* (3rd ed.). Detroit: Gale Research.
- Peters, J. L. (1985). *Christian perfection and American Methodism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press. Original work published in 1956.
- Stark, R. & Finke, R. (2000). *Acts of faith: Explaining the human side of religion*. Berkeley, CA: U of California P.
- Wyneken, F. C. D. (1982). *The distress of the German Lutherans in North America*. Translated by S. E. Schmidt & edited by R. F. Rehmer. Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press. Original work published in 1843.
-

“Who stands fast? Only the person whose final standard is not his or her reason, principles, conscience, freedom, or virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all this when called to obedient and responsible action in faith and in exclusive allegiance to God—the responsible person, who tries to make his or her whole life an answer to the question and call of God.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers*

Administrative Talk

by Glen Kuck

Leaders and Managers

There's an old Middle East proverb that says, "The beginning of wisdom comes when a person plants a tree, the shade under which he knows he will never sit." Lutheran principals and teachers work for future generations. They invest their lives in the lives of students, knowing that they may not be around to see the results of their efforts. The growth of trees takes the visioning skills of leaders and the planting and cultivating skills of managers. So does the growth of young people.

Being a principal requires being both a leader and a manager. The manager side of a principal shows concern for things like efficiency, cost, organization, and getting things done. The focus is on the day-to-day tasks that keep a school functioning smoothly. Managers are analytical and convergent in their thinking.

The leader side of a principal is more visionary. The focus is farther down the road. Leaders think intuitively and divergently. While managers stress tangible things, leaders stress the intangibles like values and motivation. Burt Namus states it this way, "Managers are concerned with doing things right. . . . Leaders focus on doing the right thing and choosing what should be done and why, not just how to do it" (Boyett, 1991, pp.145- 47).

In their book *Workplace 2000: The Revolution Reshaping American Business*, the authors quote Jay Conger as he provides the following contrast of listener reactions to leaders and managers:

About the leader: "I enjoy listening to him—it can be very exciting at times. . . . He's so visionary when he speaks. . . . He provides a tremendous challenge."

About the manager: "He can often be very detailed in his speeches covering a lot of ground. . . . He generally reads them from a prepared manuscript so there is not a lot of dynamism."

About the leader: "He fills the room with ideas, challenges. . . . He's very engaging. He puts the force of his personality behind his ideas, and he gets you moving toward an idea as quickly as you can."

About the manager: "He speaks in a businesslike tone. It's really a monotone" (p. 153).

It is common for principals to be so mired in the daily tasks

of managing a school that their role as leaders gets pushed aside. But principals who can visualize meaningful mission for the school are vital. Schools need people who lead in ways that inspire the staff and students to follow. Such leaders create pride and excitement. They empower others within the school to lead. They nurture and tap the talents of people who can then help instill the vision in others.

Good leaders are good communicators. They know how to transfer their vision to others. "The task of leadership . . . becomes a matter of infusing day-to-day work with a larger sense of purpose and intrinsic appeal. To accomplish this, the leader must not only be able to sense meaningful opportunities in the environment but also to describe them in ways that maximize their significance," writes Jay Conger (Boyett & Conn, 1991, p. 152). They communicate their vision by what they say, what they write, how they teach, and how they act.

Good leaders know how to communicate with tact. As Zig Ziglar once observed, "Tactful leadership involves lighting a fire under people without making their blood boil."

They know how to communicate in ways that inspire, not bore. There's the story about a young man who was asked to speak to a large group of people for the first time. He approached his mentor for advice on how to present his speech. The older man replied, "Son, write an exciting opening that will grab everyone's attention. Then write a dramatic closing that will make the people want to act. Then put them as close together as possible" (Maxwell, 1999, p. 26). Leaders know how to communicate concisely.

They also know how to listen well. A well-planned vision is seldom the result of just one mind. Visions forged from the combined efforts of the entire faculty have a much greater chance to become reality. Leaders get people to follow because they've listened to their input. They persuade others because they've listened to them as well as spoken to them.

Leaders demonstrate that they are more than just abstract thinkers. They display steadiness. They make good, sound, fair decisions consistently. They exhibit commitment to the mission of the school. There's an old story about a chicken and a pig who were walking past a restaurant. A sign in the window of the eatery stated, "Special today—ham and eggs—\$3.00." The chicken remarked, "Isn't that nice? Our two species are supplying the main items for today's special." The pig replied, "That's easy for you to say. Supplying an egg is just a small sacrifice for you. Supplying the ham means total commitment for me." Schools need leaders who demonstrate total commitment.

Principals realize that leadership is action, not position. They know they don't establish credibility based on their job title. They earn it day after day, year after year. They know that the inspiring words of a leader mean little if they aren't matched with a solid track record of performance as a manager. The teachers and the staff need to know that the details and mundane tasks required of a principal are going to get done. Supplies need to arrive on time, paperwork needs to be done in a timely manner,

communication with the various publics needs to be carried out well, and wayward students need to be dealt with appropriately. They need a principal who will work alongside them. They need a principal who has big dreams but also has the time to help them through little problems that arise each day.

Schools need principals who have the vision to see many miles down the road as well as the ability to care for the road directly beneath their feet.†

References

- Boyett, J. & Conn, H. (1991). *Workplace 2000: The revolution reshaping American business*. New York: Dutton Publishers.
- Maxwell, J. (1999). *The 21 indispensable qualities of a leader*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

“The implications of the name *Immanuel* are both comforting and unsettling. Comforting, because he has come to share the danger as well as the drudgery of our everyday lives. He desires to weep with us and to wipe away our tears. And what seems most bizarre, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, longs to share in and be the source of the laughter and the joy we all too rarely know.

“The implications are unsettling. It is one thing to claim that God looks down upon us, from a safe distance, and speaks to us (via long distance, we hope). But to say that he is right here, is to put ourselves and him in a totally new situation. He is no longer the calm and benevolent observer in the sky, the kindly old caricature with the beard. His image becomes that of Jesus, who wept and laughed, who fasted and feasted, and who, above all, was fully present to those he loved. He was there with them. He is here with us.”

Michael Card, *Immanuel: Reflections of the Life of Christ*

Law and Gospel: A New Paradigm

In 1 John 2, John talks about presenting a new command, and yet, not a new command, but an old command. I want to share with you a new paradigm, yet, not a new paradigm, but an old paradigm. A paradigm which some of you may have been practicing consciously, and many of you have been practicing unconsciously. I bring it to your attention not because it is new to you, but to draw it more to your consciousness, because the more conscious we are, the more consistent we are.

Law and Gospel, and the proper distinction between them have always been very important in Lutheran theology. C.F.W. Walther states that next to the doctrine of “justification by grace through faith” (Eph. 2:8-9), the proper distinction between law and gospel is the second most important doctrine of the church and to that task he identifies twenty-five theses. I would agree that the proper distinction between law and gospel is the second most important doctrine of the church, but I would also suggest that in the church we tend to practice an important, but limited application of law and gospel. We have focused upon the debatable three uses of the law and upon one use of the gospel. I propose that along with three uses of the law there are also three uses of the gospel. I propose a new paradigm of law and gospel (Figure 1).

I would suggest that as Lutheran Christians we have done an exceptional job in addressing the three uses of the law, and what I propose to be the second use of the gospel. I would also suggest that we have been less effective as a denomination in sharing what I would call the first use and the third use of the gospel.

The First Use of the Law

The first use of the law is that of a curb. It is to protect us from ourselves and to protect society from us. It recognizes that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that by nature we will act in perceived self-interest, rather than in the interests of others. In the first use of the law, the law presents a threat in order to curb us from our perceived self-interest, which in reality is neither in the interest of others, nor in the interest of self.

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.

We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine. (1 Tim. 1:8-10, all Bible references NIV)

DCE Expressions
by Bill Cullen, Concordia University, River Forest, IL

Figure 1: A New Paradigm of Law and Gospel

Law →	Gospel →	Law →	Gospel →	Law →	Gospel
Curb/ Restraint	Invitation	Mirror/ Conviction	Assurance	Direction	Empower- ment
First Use	First Use	Second Use	Second Use	Third Use	Third Use
1 Tim. 1:8-10	1 Jn. 1:8-9	Rom. 7:7	Rom. 5:6-8	Psalms 119:105	2 Pe. 1:3-4

The First Use of the Gospel

What I would identify as the first use of the gospel is the “gospel of invitation.” God invites the unregenerate sinner (those under the first use of the law and those under the second use of the law) to trust him and his love and in that trust to look in the mirror of the law. He does so by making promises.

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:7-9)

As a side note, it is interesting and significant that the covenant Paul refers to as coming first is not the covenant of law made with Moses, but the covenant of unconditional love and commitment made with Abraham.

What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. (Gal. 3:17-18)

The Second Use of the Law

The second use of the law, which Luther and Lutheran theology would identify as the chief use of the law, is for those who having heard God’s gospel of invitation are in need of realizing that in and of themselves they are unworthy of the invitation and unqualified to receive it. It is a law that convicts us. It is a law that shows us our sin and our desperate need of a Savior.

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. Once I was alive apart from

law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. (Rom. 7:7-10)

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. (Gal. 3:23-24)

The Second Use of the Gospel

The second use of the gospel is a gospel of grace, assuring repentant sinners (persons who have heard God's law of conviction and God's gospel of invitation) that they indeed have been forgiven. Through Jesus' suffering and death atonement has been made for our sins and we are now justified, that is "Just-As-If-I'd" never sinned. Within Lutheran circles (and justly so) this has been the primary use of the gospel.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice. (Rom. 3:23-25)

At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:6-8)

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21)

The Third Use of the Law

The third use of the law is that of guide. It teaches the repentant sinner who desires to do the will of God, what the will of God is.

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11)

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105)

The Third Use of the Gospel

The third use of the gospel is the use of the gospel I believe we as a church body neglect the most. The third use of the gospel is the gospel of empowerment. If one teaches three uses of the law without teaching this third use of the gospel, we leave the forgiven and repentant person under the law with a focus upon what he or she ought to do, but without the power to do it. The third use of the gospel is experienced

in knowing the empowerment of Jesus' indwelling presence through his Spirit. We are able because he is able. God's math is: "Jesus + me = more than enough." Anytime Jesus is in the equation we have "more than enough." Thank God, Jesus is in the equation.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)

Now he is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. (Eph. 3:20)

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

In concluding, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2)†

"Frequently, the reason we do not join [God in his work] is that we are not committed to join him. We are wanting God to bless us, not to work through us. As a church, do not look for how God is going to bless you. Look for how God is going to reveal himself by working through you and out beyond you to accomplish his purposes. The working of God in you will bring a blessing. The blessing is the by-product of your obedience and experience of God at work in your midst."

Henry Blackaby and Claude King,

Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God

Family Album

Today's Lutheran educators . . . no two are alike. What a blessing! God has called individuals with a vast array of educational backgrounds, family situations, geographic locations, interest areas, social surroundings, and levels of expertise to ministry in education settings that are equally diverse. By the power of the Holy Spirit, his Word is placed directly into the hearts and minds of children, youth, and adults every minute of every day. Through vehicles such as schools, churches, youth gatherings, Bible classes, athletic events, childcare, English lessons, and field trips, lives around the world are touched with the love of Jesus as reflected in servants who call themselves Lutheran educators.

How can this all happen in so many different locations, with such a variety of people, and all based upon a common mission? Who is equipped to carry out the Great Commission and make the Good News come alive among millions around the world? If it's been a while since you've thought about it and you can't easily picture it, you might want to pull out the Lutheran educator family album.* Page through its contents in your mind. There are millions of images to review. What a span of time to take into consideration! Do you recognize some of the people and places? *You* are in some of the pictures as well!

When I glance through our family album, I start back at the time of Martin Luther, who insisted on the value of Christian education in the home and by teachers who are equipped to support that ministry in meaningful ways. I come across snapshots of our forefathers, who carried the emphasis on Lutheran education from their native countries to other lands, including the United States. Early missionary work used Christian education as the basis for evangelism and nurturing the faith. The faces of faithful pastors and teachers appear often in the family album, and in every conceivable setting.

Snapshots of Lutheran schools increasingly fill the pages of our album as the Church has taken on this ministry in more formal ways over the past 150 years. Our Lutheran educator family has grown in ways that could not be imagined. Faces of teachers appear in cities, small towns, and suburban areas all around North America. Missionaries to other continents carried Christian education into areas where the first lesson was about Jesus' wonderful love for all his people. Schools were begun in many parts of Africa, Asia, South America, Europe, and Australia. The number of family members grew quickly as

Today's Lutheran Educator
by Jonathan Laabs, Executive Director of the Lutheran Education Association

formal training for Lutheran educators took hold and teachers were placed into increasingly diverse ministry settings.

The Lutheran educator family album continues to grow. As childcare programs quickly develop, new early childhood centers and elementary schools spring up. New locations for Lutheran high schools are explored every year. Education programs are being initiated as the primary means of carrying missionary work into countries that have been otherwise too difficult to enter. Lutheran church bodies all over the world are looking for ways of further developing their schools. Both the number and the types of faces in the album are increasing—a true blessing from God. Exciting things are happening in the name of Lutheran education!

In October of 2002, new pictures for the album were created. Thirty-seven Lutheran educators from six areas of Asia and several U.S. participants met to seek a common vision for Lutheran schools in Asia. The first-ever Asia Lutheran Educators Conference, held in Taiwan, allowed for members of the Lutheran educator family (many of whom had never met) to listen, observe, and interact regarding key objectives common to ministries in diverse settings. Over 1400 educators serve some 170,000 students in schools that range from enrollments of 67 to 2600 in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, and Macau. The conference resulted in specific goals and direction involving all Asian Lutheran schools, LCMS World Missions, Lutheran higher education, and LEA. Blank pages in the album will soon be filled!

If you're starting to feel a bit overwhelmed, don't worry . . . the whole album is too big for any one of us to absorb. In fact, it's a work in progress. It is unlikely that any of us will see every picture. But each time I take a glimpse of a few pages, my ministry is enhanced. I realize how big and diverse our Lutheran educator family really is. What's most exciting is that each of us is a face in the album! Let's take the time once in a while to stroll through "memory lane." Let's also learn more about the pictures that are being added to the album every day. Combine what's happening in *your* part of the Lutheran education world with the stories of your fellow Lutheran educator family members in other parts of the world. Keep snapping those pictures!✠...

*The theme of "Family Album" was used as the basis for the keynote speech delivered at the Asia Lutheran Educators Conference by Rev. David Birner, LCMS Area Director for East Asia.

A Few Things I'd Like to See in the Church/School/Home . . .

Here are some simple suggestions for a more effective ministry, happier days together, and how we can encourage each other to celebrate the power and presence of our Lord in our lives. And while we're at it, why not think of some items you might add to the list. Be creative!

1. More adults talking to kids—around the kitchen table, in the lunchroom, before worship, in the neighborhood. Start by just saying “Hi”!
2. More adults listening to kids!
3. Life “Mulligans.” We’d be allowed one “do over” each day! We could erase the silly comment we made, the foolish action we took, the selfish thought we had . . . Wow, come to think of it, the Lord gives all of us “Mulligans” each day, through the forgiveness that is ours in Christ!
4. Recess for adults! Why should the grade schoolers have all the fun? Each day at 2:30 p.m., wherever we are and whatever we’re doing, it’s “recess time”! Go play on the swings, throw a ball, or take a nap!
5. Penalty Boxes. Just like in hockey, you mess up, into the box you go for 2 minutes. It would be like a “time out” for adults! A good chance to re-think our actions and get our focus on life back.
6. Conversation Editors. A way of making “on-the-go” corrections as we speak! It sure would help our language usage, as well as our relationships with others!
7. Mute buttons to quiet over-zealous talkers! If it works for the TV, why not with people?
8. No one is allowed to say, “No, I can’t,” “Stupid,” “I don’t have time,” or any other put downs of self or others.
9. Laughing more at ourselves. We need to help each other “lighten up” in the Lord! The Lord is *still* in control, even though we often do not act like it! And “Yes,” the Lord does have a sense of humor. The problem is that he has a slow audience!
10. Everyone wears an “I Was Caught Doing Something Right” badge. And then we go out and catch people doing great things, positive things, exciting ministries. And we

Multiplying Ministries

by Rich Bimler

say “Thanks” to them for these gracious God-sent acts of care and kindness!

What I’d really like to see happening in increasing numbers is all people of God—children, youth, and adults—celebrating, proclaiming, sharing, and affirming each other, in the name of the Healing Christ!

Now, feel free to make your own list. What would you like to see more of around you and yours? And I do not want to hear, “No, I can’t,” or into the penalty box you go!

Blessings and hope to you as, together, we see the Lord at work in big and little things, at church, at home, and at school!✠

Two Thoughts on Leadership

“Men make history, and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.”

Harry S. Truman

“The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership.”

Harvey S. Firestone

We Need A New Code

There is an old code running rampant in our world. It has been around for centuries. It is prevalent in American public schools. I believe it rears its ugly head on a daily basis in Lutheran schools, too. To follow it leads to death. But it is deceptive and, therefore, difficult to detect. Like all deception, it can look so good and so right, especially when dressed up in religious garments.

The code looks like this: we believe that there is a certain way to live that will guarantee our desired outcomes. Take a stroll through any bookstore, even a Christian one, and note the number of books with titles like these: *A Compact Guide to Authentic Living*, *101 Ways to Help People in Need*, *Parenting the Hurt Child*, *Best Bible Study Methods*. We can read twenty different ways to lose weight, have a good marriage, manage finances, and build ministries. The underlying assumptions are these: there is a method that works and all we need to do is follow it.

And many Christians live their lives relying upon God to show them the method and then give them the wisdom and strength to follow it. Their biggest aim is for bigger schools, better marriages, or obedient children. In short, they are like the prodigal son who wanted the gifts more than he wanted the Giver. Their ultimate goal is for a happy life now.

The problem is that this old code doesn't work. The Israelites discovered that lesson repeatedly after Sinai. It puts a burden on people that is too great to bear, for humans do one thing consistently—we fail.

Paul addressed the old code as it was sneaking back into the church at Galatia. A group known as the Judaizers were demanding that people do this and that to be really good Christians. Paul wrote, "But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?" (Gal. 4:9).

We are surrounded by desperately thirsty people. They want to know how to keep that boyfriend, how to get into that good college, how to prevent their children from big mistakes, how to get that administrator to agree with them. The last thing they need from us is an old code that doesn't work over the long haul (some do temporarily!).

Secondary Sequence

by Craig Parrott, Denver Lutheran High School

We need a new code to live by, a new Covenant if you will. Praise God, we have it! “The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God” (Heb. 7:18-19).

In his latest book, *The Pressure's Off*, Larry Crabb (2002) writes: “True life is knowing God. . . . And the life is Christ himself, not the bread he could multiply or the corpse he could resurrect, but him. Being in him, having him in us, living with his energy, chasing after his purposes, loving what he loves, seeing him form in us until we're actually like him—that's life.”

The New covenant is beautifully presented in Ezekiel 36:25-28:

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

Note that God does everything in this new code. And the ultimate result is fellowship with him. May the Spirit lead us away from relying on the old code to strive for idols. And may he most definitely direct our hearts and minds to this greatest blessing—closeness to God.†

Reference:

Crabb, L. J. (2002). *The pressure's off: There's a new way to live*. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press.

“Good works are not the cause, but the fruit of righteousness. When we have become righteous, then we are able and willing to do good. The tree makes the apple; the apple does not make the tree.”

Martin Luther, *A Commentary on Galatians*

Social Living: Our Response to God's Love

God has created us as social beings. Even in the Garden of Eden, he put Adam and Eve into relationship with each other. God ordained the idea of families and of relationships as central to human existence. In classrooms for young children, it is important that the opportunities for learning about social relationships are given the importance and the time that they need and deserve.

Spiritual and Social Relationships

"It is not good for man to be alone" was the beginning of God's concern for our social welfare. The relationships we foster socially also affect us spiritually. It is a truism that the cross has a vertical piece to remind us of the relationship God has with us and we have with him. The cross also has a horizontal piece to remind us that we are to reach out to others, building social relationships as an outgrowth of our spiritual relationship.

Social Development

As we talk about social development, we are immediately implying and assuming a relationship. Relationships happen in community. For the young child, that community is both the family and the early childhood center.

For many years, developmentalists have emphasized the community and relationship of the family. While that community is an important learning ground for social development and relationships, it is only a part of the picture. The social development learned among peers is also important. The development of peer relationships is the foundation of empathy and understanding.

Empathy and Social Development

Children are socially aware much younger than we once thought. They are egocentric and other-centric at the same time. Babies cry in response to the crying of others. This phenomenon is seen daily in the newborn nursery of hospitals. One baby's cry sets off a chain reaction very quickly. This reaction was once thought to be reflexive. However, closer study seems to point to early empathy as another explanation.

Infant teachers in child care centers report similar phenomena. While not all infants exhibit early empathy, many of them do. My granddaughter Aislinn demonstrated such empathy

long before her first birthday. By the age of eight months, she would regularly crawl over to a crying child to give comfort. The evidence of empathy and social awareness was more than her desire to be close to the child in distress. She would also reach out and pat the child in a gesture of comfort. That type of behavior does not happen if the environment and the schedule do not allow it.

Encouraging Empathy and Social Development

All teachers need to develop the skill of building environments and classroom routines that support the development and learning of social skills and empathic relationships. Teachers provide the model for such development and learning.

Young children learn relationships and empathy in community. They learn relationships and social development in the schooling community. As they learn to negotiate friendships and classroom alliances, they are practicing skills that they will use for a lifetime. Adults skilled in negotiating social relationships experience greater success than those who lack these skills.

For appropriate social learning to take place in the classroom, the environment and the classroom schedule need to support such learning. Relationships take time and practice. That practice must take place during unstructured time that allows and encourages young children to form their own groups for mutual benefit. Only as children have the time to test and build alliances and friendships will they learn the skills of negotiating and communicating to make those alliances and friendships live.

Building Caring Classrooms

The tenor of the classroom is the teacher's responsibility. The ethos of relationships is developed with the guidance of the classroom teacher. Children quickly learn whether reaching out to and supporting other children in the classroom is safe, is encouraged, and is nurtured. Children know whether collaboration is more important than competition in the teacher's eye. They also know whether relationships matter more than tasks to be accomplished.

Caring classrooms develop over time. They happen as children are given time and encouragement to practice and express care to other children. They happen as acts and expressions of empathy are supported and complimented. They grow as children have time to work side by side and together, learning how to collaborate toward mutual goals. Empathy is learned and practiced and encouraged.

In Christian classrooms, caring and empathy are essential as expressions of God's love lived out in relationships. We need to make sure that time and opportunity to practice empathy and caring are evident and intentional in our classrooms. We need to provide the environment and the ethos that communicates an expectation of caring and empathy. In that way, the social development of each child will be supported in ways that also foster children's spiritual development.✠

Dominic Smart. *When We Get It Wrong: Peter, Christ and Our Path Through Failure.* Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Publishing, 2001. 104 pages.

We're all determined to get it right. That's what a journal such as *Lutheran Education* is all about, the hope that we can do the vital work of Lutheran educational ministry better through thoughtful discussion of its ends and means: of integrating faith and learning, of the relationship between the kingdom of the right hand and the kingdom of the left, of what makes one an effective teacher/principal/DCE. The secular realm offers an even longer list of directives, standards, tests, reports, and reform initiatives aimed at eradicating the failures of American students, teachers, and schools. Self-help books tout "the twelve steps" or "the seven habits" that will enable us to overcome our weaknesses. But inevitably we crash into the wall of human finitude long before we reach that ideal of perfection.

Dominic Smart's wise little book offers a helpful, biblical antidote to our self-defeating perfectionism. In addressing the times "when we get it wrong," he's talking about discipleship, not teaching, but in Lutheran education the two are closely entwined. To be a Lutheran teacher is also to be striving toward discipleship and, no doubt, failing as frequently and as spectacularly in that pursuit as in our teaching. As his subtitle suggests, Smart holds up Peter as an example of how Christ works through those times when we fall short in our discipleship and offers a biblical process for recovery from failure.

In tracing Peter's journey toward "whole discipleship," Smart exposes the seductive temptation of legalism, an approach to Christian living that is task-oriented rather than relationship-oriented. The "starting point for authentic discipleship," Smart asserts, occurs when "Christ invades and interrupts our world," forcing us to redefine our identity in terms of our relationship with him. Peter is "sifted for discipleship" through his denial of his Lord during the trial before Pilate—one of the saddest but most reassuring stories in all of Scripture. Smart's moving discussion of Peter's failure and of how Jesus used it to "recalibrate" Peter for discipleship should be required reading for any Lutheran educator who has failed in his or her own attempts at discipleship.✠

Jonathan Barz teaches English at Concordia University, River Forest and is co-editor of Lutheran Education.

Book Reviews

A Final Word

by George C. Heider, President, Concordia University, River Forest, IL

It was U. S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart who wrote that he could not define pornography, but he knew it when he saw it. With due apologies to my colleagues of the Department of Educational Leadership at Concordia for drawing the analogy, I've come to feel much the same way about Leadership. Even after the death of thousands of trees and the production of countless studies and testimonials on the subject (including the recent bestseller by New York City's former mayor, Rudolph Giuliani), it remains surpassingly difficult to identify a specific set of aptitudes or behaviors that combine to constitute an effective leader.

And yet just as surely, we know a great leader when we see one. To a certain extent, it's a matter of "by their fruits you shall know them." Effective leaders are arguably by definition those who lead enterprises that succeed in their missions. Yet, of course, it's not that simple. Certain contexts may make organizational success a "can't miss," while others may prove daunting (or worse) to the most gifted leader. And surely none of us would countenance a leader with the mantra "the ends justify the means" or "success at any price."

What seems clear enough is that effective leadership is both *contextual* and *values-driven*. That is, an effective leader is one who, by nature or by adaptation, displays traits and behaviors that serve the needs of a group or organization well at a given time in its history. But an effective leader cannot simply be a chameleon. Capacities like the ability both to face reality whole, however negative, while simultaneously seeing and moving others to a brighter future, necessitate a core of non-negotiable beliefs and values. In sum, effective leaders seem both born and made, both adaptable and centered, both situation-specific and transcendent of situation.

Sounds paradoxical? It is. But that shouldn't bother a Lutheran—least of all, a Lutheran leader.✠